

MANICHAISM



MICHEL TARDIEU

Translated from the French by M. B. DeBevoise

Introduction by Paul Mirecki

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Introduction

Paul Mirecki

It is often said, and rightly so, that the modern study of Manichaeism began with “Ein Mani-Fund”—that is, with the publication in 1933 of an article by Hans-Jacob Polotsky and Carl Schmidt entitled “Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten: Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler.” This article focused on the sensational discovery of several fourth-century Coptic Manichaean codices at Narmouthis (modern Medinet Madi) in Egypt’s Faiyum, first attested to have been seen in Egypt in 1929. Although significant Manichaean manuscripts in Latin, Iranian, Turkic, and Chinese had been discovered previously (the most important eastern manuscripts had been found in Central Asia by A. von Le Coq and A. Grünwedel in 1904–14 and by A. Stein in 1905–7; in the West, the Latin fragments found near Tebessa, Algeria, were published by H. Omont in 1918, the same year as their discovery), the Coptic papyri discussed by Polotsky and Schmidt were to exert an immediate, significant, and long-lasting influence on the history of Manichaean research in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond.

Within a few years, primary Coptic Manichaean texts in transcription and modern translation were made available by Polotsky (1934), C. R. C. Allberry (1938), and A. Böhlig and Polotsky (1940) and published in folio editions by W. Kohlhammer Verlag in Stuttgart. For the first time scholars could analyze the seemingly complex and little known Manichaean religion on its own terms rather than on the biased accounts of the ancient and medieval heresiologists.

The war years could not have helped but have a stifling effect on the mostly European-based Manichaean scholarship of the time, which suffered the loss of a number of promising researchers, including Allberry himself, a brilliant young British coptologist who died during an ill-fated

Royal Air Force mission over Nedeweert, Holland, on 3 April 1943 (he was later memorialized by his friend, the scientist and author C. P. Snow, in his novels *The Light and the Dark* [1947] and *The Masters* [1951]). During the chaos that engulfed Europe following the war, some of the precious Manichaean papyri housed in Germany were lost; others survived, but with their identities confused. Some were even temporarily housed with other antiquities in one of the three large antiaircraft towers in wartime Berlin—specifically, the tower located at the Berlin Zoo.

But from the 1950s to the 1970s, with the rapidly growing interest in the so-called gnostic library discovered in 1945 near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, scholars turned their attention to the new Coptic collection (which contained dozens of texts with intriguing titles such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Dialogue of the Savior, and the Secret Book of John), to the disadvantage of the Coptic Manichaean texts. Even so, the enormous amount of scholarly commentary on the Nag Hammadi texts, together with the interest aroused by numerous international conferences, provided a model for the development of Coptic Manichaean studies and soon an entire field of Manichaean research. Although the close relationship between the Nag Hammadi and Medinet Madi collections was on the whole positive, prompting many scholars to work in both fields, it had the unfortunate result of causing Manichaeism to be classified as just another form of gnosticism—a modern category that fit neither collection very well.

Research in Manichaeism nonetheless received fresh impetus from A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, who announced in 1970 that they had succeeded in deciphering a small Greek vellum “butterfly” codex acquired in Egypt, published in 1971, and known today as the Cologne Mani Codex. Scholars now refer to its fragmentary text as “On the Origin of His Body” (i.e., on the origins of Mani’s church—this is a modern quotation from the text, since the original title has been lost), an early anthology based primarily on Mani’s own statements about his life that presented researchers with new information about the crucial early period of Mani’s ministry and its interpretation by his disciples. The codex drew a great deal of attention from scholars of late antiquity, as much for its unusual form in miniature as for its intended purpose, then unclear.

Michel Tardieu’s short introductory volume, which first appeared in

1981 as part of the popular “Que Sais-Je?” series, published in Paris by Presses Universitaires de France, made current research in the scholarly study of Manichaeism accessible to a new generation of students and scholars. In the meantime, the International Association of Manichaean Studies had been founded and in 1987 hosted its first international congress in Lund, Sweden; the following year a research group called the Manichaean Consultation (now the Manichaean Studies Seminar) was founded in North America under the auspices of the Society of Biblical Literature. Both groups continue to sponsor international conferences and issue publications on a regular basis today. Tardieu’s book therefore came out at a most timely moment indeed, and in 1997 it appeared in a second, revised edition—evidence both of the warm reception it had received in academic circles and of the accelerating pace of research. Even so, its audience remained limited to those who could read French. This situation has now changed with the appearance of an excellent English translation by M. B. DeBevoise under the imprint of the University of Illinois Press.

◉ ◉ ◉ Manichaean research in the twentieth century was necessarily dominated by codicological and philological work that sought to clarify the nature of the newly discovered texts by producing and publishing long-awaited critical editions, modern translations, and photographic facsimiles. This activity also involved the long and difficult process of restoring and conserving often heavily damaged papyrus manuscripts—work that still continues for much of the extant material.

With the growth of Manichaean studies in the 1980s, however, and the resulting availability of Manichaean primary texts in critical editions and translations, research quickly moved from its initial preoccupation with philological issues and descriptive history-of-religions models to the adoption of new, synthetic methodologies pioneered in the humanities and social sciences. These methods have cast light on the diverse ways in which Mani’s church interacted with the various social and religious traditions that formed the cultural context from which Manichaeism arose and in terms of which it defined itself. Today one finds textual analysis being carried out from the novel perspectives of gender studies and ritual studies, as well as those of the more traditional disciplines, such

as art history (since Mani and his disciples were also evangelistic painters working in a recognizable Manichaean style); even the early concern with the basic philological issues of establishing texts and producing critical editions and translations has been extended to include an examination of the broader contextual evidence these texts provide with respect to the dialects and idiolects of individual Manichaean scribes.

Recent research has led scholars to challenge the claims of formerly dominant patristic and other heresiological sources by exposing the strong biases (whether Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, or Zoroastrian) of their authors. Reevaluation of these sources has given rise to the view that such “outsider texts” tell us more about the heresiologists themselves than about their Manichaean opponents. Both the medieval conception of Manichaeism as a heresy and its more recent interpretation as a form of gnosticism, as well as the very notion of orthodoxy, now find themselves subject to intense scrutiny by scholars. Indeed, it has been suggested that the study of Manichaeism constitutes a test case for the deconstruction of received official histories in general.

In contrast to their counterparts a century ago, today’s students of Manichaeism enjoy a rich selection of primary and secondary Manichaean sources from a broad variety of ancient cultures extending from Algeria to southeast China, in addition to an abundance of published studies, anthologies, and reference works. Moreover, the growth in the number of university courses and graduate seminars on Manichaeism over the past twenty years reflects a coincident increase in the number of teaching faculty who are familiar with Manichaeism, or actually specializing in it, with the result that more doctoral dissertations on Manichaean studies are being submitted in universities in Europe and North America every year.

Modern scholars, in examining the works of the early heresiologists, have argued that the great weakness of Manichaeism was not only the intense ascetical demands it made on its followers but also the complexity of its mythology. In this book, Michel Tardieu presents one of the clearest and most accessible accounts of this mythology, as well as of Mani’s life, his writings and those of his disciples, and the structure and nature of the Manichaean Church. Its place as required reading for future generations of students and scholars is therefore assured.

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Translator's Note

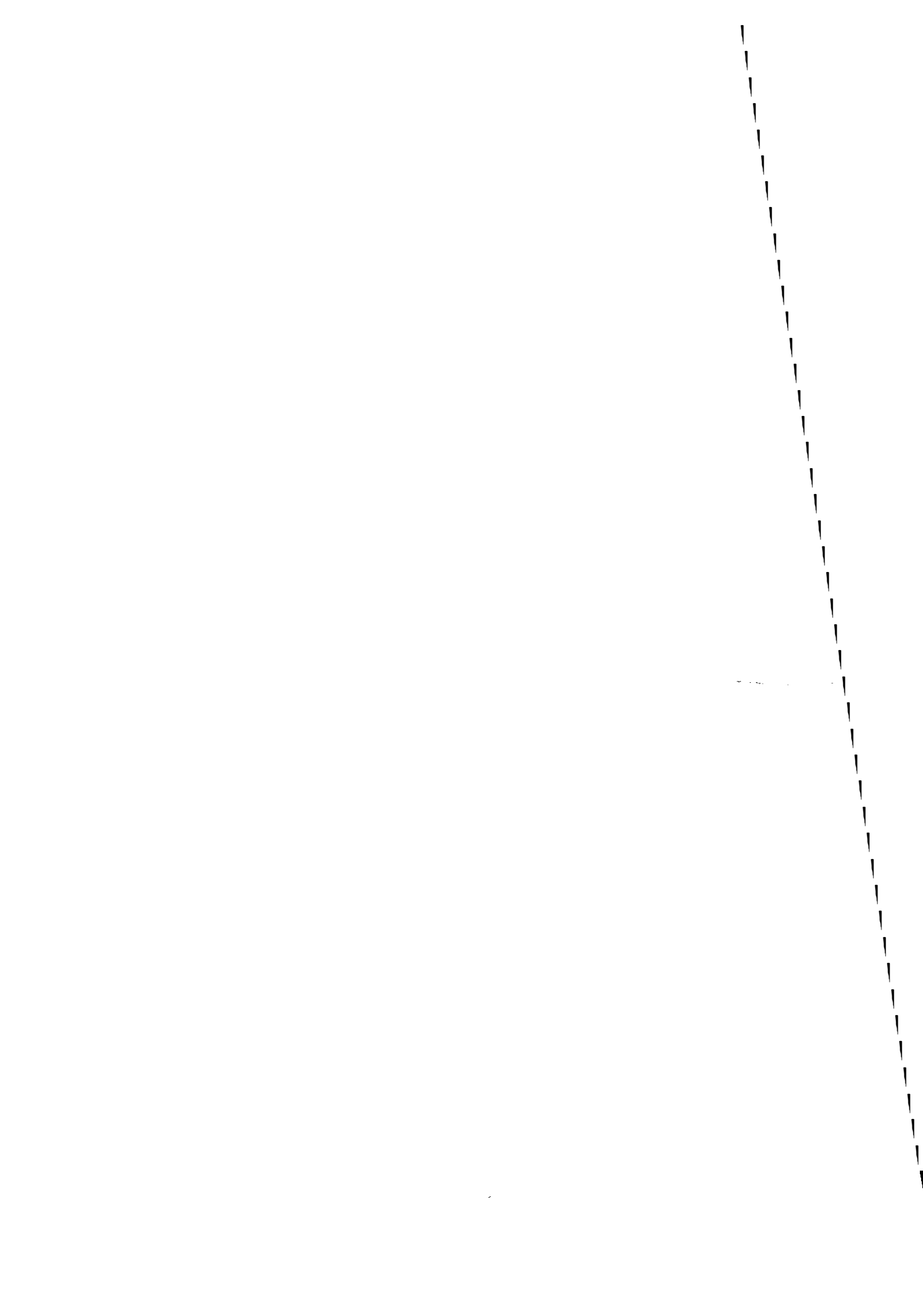
In the translation of extracts from primary sources I have followed the author's renderings for the most part, while taking care to compare these to other versions. An English translation by Iain Gardner of much of the Coptic *Kephalaia* is now available as *The Kephalaia of the Teacher* (Leiden, 1995). Several important commentaries have appeared since the publication of the second edition of the French text. The recent volume by Gardner and Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism Texts from the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2004), contains a good deal of material translated from the *Cologne Mani-Codex* that takes Römer's suggested revisions into account. On Syro-Mesopotamian gnosis and Jewish traditions, see John C. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm* (Leiden, 1996). English versions of a number of the Iranian and Turkish texts cited, including the Manichaean commandments, can be found in Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road* (San Francisco, 1993). The Chinese Manichaean heritage is treated in considerable detail in Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China* (Leiden, 1998).

Here and there I have inserted brief glosses, either to explain terms that otherwise would be familiar only to specialists in the history of ancient religions (such as *encratism*, *synaxis*, and the like) or to make it easier to follow the sometimes elliptical exposition of the French text. Additionally, I have expanded the bibliographic information embedded in the text and slightly added to the chronological account that follows it.

The author's system of simplified transcription has been retained, though variants are occasionally noted and familiar English renderings substituted for place names (*Merv*, for example, rather than *Merw*; *Karabalghasun* rather than *Qara-balghasun*) and proper names (*Shapur* rather than *Shabuhr* or *Sapores*) where these are generally used in the

scholarly literature of the ancient Near East. In transliterating foreign terms I have followed the French text both in forgoing the diacritical marks customarily employed to distinguish simple from emphatic phonemes, long from short vowels, and the voiced from the unvoiced *h* and in using the groups *th*, *kh* (or *x*), *dh*, the palato-alveolar fricative *sh*, and *gh* to transcribe the letters *tha'*, *kha'*, and so on; *tch* and *zh* to transcribe the *č* and *ž* of Persian and Turkish; and *sh*, *f*, *h*, *j*, *c*, and *ti* to transcribe the six demotic letters peculiar to Coptic. On the other hand, I have tended to substitute *v* for the *w* found in certain Sogdian transliterations (thus, for example, *Xvastvaneft* rather than *Xwastweneft* or the strict reading *X^{uā}stvānift*) and made similarly minor changes where conventional Anglo-American practice departs from the French. Finally, the reader will note that the author's use of the Wade-Giles (rather than the pinyin) system for transcribing Chinese names has been preserved.

The following acronyms and abbreviations have been brought over from the French edition as well: Ar = Arabic; Aram = Aramaic; c = common to all sources; ca. = about (*circa*); Chin = Chinese; CMC = *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*; Copt = Coptic; Gr = Greek; H = Hegiran year; Lat = Latin; MP = Middle Persian; Parth = Parthian; Sogd = Sogdian; Syr = Syriac; OT = Old Turkish (or Uighur).



Manichaeism





Mani

Date and Place of Mani's Birth

Mani himself indicated the date and place of his birth. In the *Shabuhrgan* (composed in Middle Persian in honor of Shapur [Shabuhr] I—whence its title), in the chapter titled “On the Coming of the Prophet,” Mani says that he was born in Babylonia, in the year 527 of the era of the astronomers of Babel, four years after the beginning of the reign of the Parthian king Adharban, which is to say Artavan (Artabanus) V, last sovereign of the Arsacid Dynasty, in a town [*qarya*] called Mardinu on the nahr-Kutha (Nahr Kuta). The versatile Khwarazmian writer and computist al-Biruni (died ca. H 442/A.D. 1050) refers twice to this passage from the *Shabuhrgan* in his *Kitab al-athar al-baqiya*. Various indirect and composite sources, on the other hand, among them works by the Mesopotamian Theodore bar Konai (eighth century) and the Arab Ibn al-Nadim (died ca. H 380/990), contain little more than hearsay evidence. Any attempt to square these accounts with the details furnished by al-Biruni seems doomed to failure.

The compiler of the Coptic *Kephalaia* drew the biographical details given there from the *Shabuhrgan* as well. In *Keph.* 1, entitled “On the Coming of the Apostle,” he places the event in the Egyptian month of Pharmouthi during the reign of Artabanus. The Chinese *Compendium*, written by a Manichaen dignitary in 731 on the order of the imperial chancellery, also confirms that Mani was born in the year 527 of the era governed by the twelfth constellation (*mo-sieh*), on the eighth day of the second month of the thirteenth year of the Chien-an period of the Emperor Hsien of the (last) Han Dynasty. The computations of various calendars (Babylonian, Iranian, Chinese, Egyptian) therefore give the same date: the year 527 of the lunar Seleucid (or Alexandrian) era, or

216 of our era. As for the mention of the day and the month (8 Nisan = 14 April) found in several non-Arabic sources, it has no historical value, serving only to allow Manichaeans to establish the calendar of their festivals.

Mani came into the world in a rural community on the banks of the upper course of the Nahr Kuta, which flows from a point northeast of Babylon southward to Nippur (Nuffar). The Akkadian place name, for which the Aramaic name of Mardinu has been substituted as the birth-place of Mani, has not been identified.

Mani's Parents

Only the name of the head of the family, Mani's father, is known with certainty. The Manichaean compilation "On the Origin of His Body," written in Greek in a small parchment manuscript volume (4.5 x 3.5 centimeters) and conserved at the University of Cologne—hence the acronym *CMC* (*Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* = *Cologne Mani Codex*) used to refer to it—calls Mani's father Pattikios, a Hellenized form of the Iranian Pattig or Patteg (Patiq in Syriac).

Manichaean tradition later embellished the origins of its founder. Iranizing apologetics, on the one hand, cast Patteg as a descendant of an old Parthian family, the Haskaniya, whose roots were in the Median capital of Hamadan. Persian Manichaeans attributed many names to Mani's mother (Mays, Karussa, Utakhim, Taqshit, Nushit), associating her with the Kamsaragan family, itself related to the royal house of the Arsacids. One finds a distinguished lineage ascribed to the founder of a religion in the case of Buddhism and Christianity as well.

As a result of Christianizing apologetics, on the other hand, Mani's mother was also given the name of Jesus' mother: Maryam (Mariam). Eastern Manichaeans made his father an emigrant and defector who had left Hamadan for al-Mada'in and al-Mada'in for the region of Nahr Kutha, in imitation of accounts of Jesus' childhood, which relate the departure of Joseph of Nazareth for Jerusalem, and from there to Egypt. Like Jesus, Mani was said to have been an only son. And like his Christian precursor, claimed as the descendant of an ancient princely family of Israel, Mani

the Aramaean was said to be descended from an ancient princely family of Iran.

The Religions of Mani's Father

What was Patteg's religion? The Arab encyclopedist Ibn al-Nadim supplies us with a few hints in the *Kitab al-Fihrist*, or "Catalogue" (H 377/990):

It is related that at al-Mada'in [= Ctesiphon] there was a house of idols that Fattiq [Patteg] was in the habit of frequenting, like many other people. Now, one day, there resounded for him from the inner sanctum of the house of idols this cry: "O Fattiq, eat no meat, drink no wine, abstain from all sexual relations!" Fattiq heard this call many times, for three days. Having understood the message, he associated himself with a group of people near Dastumisan known as the Cleansers [*al-mughtasila*]. Even in our time, some of them still survive in these regions and in the Bata'ih. They followed the religious law [*al-madhhab*] to which Fattiq had been ordered to adhere while his wife was pregnant with Mani.

In transferring to the father the visions of the son (for the sanctity of the latter implies that of the former), the tradition from which Ibn al-Nadim's source derived represents an illuminating episode in Manichaean hagiography—all the more so since it tells us that Patteg was a pagan, that his conversion preceded or slightly followed the birth of Mani, and that the religious community he joined professed Babylonian Mughtasilism.

The expressions "house of idols" and "shrine of the house of the idols" attest that the temple frequented by Patteg was not a temple of fire. It follows that the religious milieu in which Mani was brought up was not Zoroastrian. It may be further supposed that Patteg's paganism was what *Keph.* 121 calls the "sect of *nobe*," established "in the midst of the land of Babylon." According to the Coptic text, the priest of this religion, with whom Mani was to engage in controversy, was an idolater [*refshmshe eidolon*]. If one assumes that the word *nobe*, unknown in Coptic, comes from the Semitic, then Mani's father would have been, before becoming a Mughtasila, a worshiper of the god Nabu—that is, a follower of the traditional religion still current in Babylonia and northern Mesopotamia (Harran).

The three commandments whose call Patteg heard from the shrine of the idols show that the motivation for his conversion was essentially practical. Patteg abandoned one way of life for another. And by submitting to a rule founded on abstinence and continence, he left one religion, whose Harranian form known by Arab writers was removed from ascetic practices, to adhere to a religious tendency dominated by encratism [a doctrine that abominated matter and enjoined its followers to abstain from all carnal pleasure]. Inasmuch as the priests of the traditional religion were astrologers accustomed to dispensing visions and revelations, Patteg, in becoming a baptist, only exchanged one variety of revelation for another.

The Mughtasila

The group that Patteg joined while his wife was pregnant with Mani was called by Ibn al-Nadim *al-mughtasila* ("those who wash themselves"), the Arabic counterpart to the Greek word *baptistai* (baptists). In the ninth and tenth centuries, remnants of these baptist communities were still found in these parts of Babylonia, and in particular in the Bata'ih, a technical term of geography designating the marshy expanses of the Mesopotamian low country, between Wasit and al-Basra. "These people are numerous in the Bata'ih," repeats Ibn al-Nadim in the account he gives concerning them in the *Fihrist*:

They are the Sabaeans of the Bata'ih. They practice ablutions, and wash everything that they eat. Their leader is called al-Khasayh [= Gr CMC: Alkhasaios (mss: al-Hasayh)]. It is he who gave the community its law. They assert that the two fields of being [*al-kawnayn*] are male and female: edible herbs are hair of the male, dodder [a leafless parasitic plant] is hair of the female, and the trees are their veins. They recount monstrous tales, which take the form of fables. The disciple of al-Khasayh was called Sham'un. They agreed with the Manichaeans on the Two Principles. Their community later broke away [from the Manichaeans]. There are some among them still today who venerate the stars.

Al-Nadim goes on to echo another tradition concerning the Sabaeans of the Bata'ih:

These people uphold the ancient doctrine of the Nabataeans: they venerate the stars and have images and idols. The ordinary Sabaeans are called Harranians, although it is said they are not identical to them either as a group or as individuals. [After the French translation by G. Monnot]

The geographical and ideological proximity of the Mughtasila Sabaeans and the star-worshipping Sabaeans of Harran led the Arab historian to group them together. Even if, as we have seen, these two forms of “Sabaeism” are close variants of a single system of revelation, they must not be confused, since it was by passing from one to the other that Mani’s father is said to have changed his religion, that is, his way of life.

The essential aspect of the religious practice of these Mughtasila consisted in ritual ablutions, both corporeal and dietary. This is why Theodore bar Konai called them by the Syriac name *mnaqqede* (“those who purify themselves”); according to bar Konai, they called themselves *halle heware* (“white garments”), white clothing being the sign of their state of purity. With regard to ablutions, nothing distinguishes Mughtasilism from other baptist sects, whether Palestinian or Babylonian.

What appears to have been specific to the Mughtasila movement is its code of dietary observance. In addition to prohibiting the consumption of fermented beverages and meat, it divided foods into two categories based on social criteria. Jewish bread (that is, the locally made bread of the poor) was permitted, but Greek bread (the bread of foreigners and the rich) was forbidden. Vegetables from the gardens of the community, regarded as being essentially male, were allowed; the same vegetables coming from outside the community, and so considered to be essentially female, were disallowed. Every male vegetable had to be “baptized”—washed and ritually blessed—before being eaten.

This system of classification and exclusion needs to be kept in mind if the history of the conflicts that were to mark the stages of Mani’s development and his awareness of himself as a prophet is to be understood. As a member of the Mughtasila community, Mani was to challenge and ultimately to reject this system; later, as the founder of a church, he was to impose his own dietary code, drawing inspiration from the one that he had grown up with and that he had rejected.

Elchasai

According to Ibn al-Nadim, the person who had constituted the Mughtasila community in terms of law, in other words, the chief founder of this religion, was called al-Khasayh (mss: al-Hasayh). He is therefore the Alkhasaios of the *CMC* and the Elchasai of the Christian heresiologists. Al-Nadim, following the example not only of Manichaean tradition but also of the Fathers of the Church, spoke of Elchasai as someone who had actually lived. It is more likely that we are dealing here with the historicization of a mythical figure who was credited with authorship of a book of revelations that was widely known in Judeo-Christian circles in Palestine and Mesopotamia at the beginning of the Christian era. The term “Elchasai” will be used in what follows to refer not to a historical person but to the anonymous author of the book that gave birth to Elchasaitic Mughtasilism, and to the book itself.

A Greek version of this book was brought to Rome at the beginning of the third century by a certain Alcibiades of Apamea. Its contents are known from a Christian polemicist who subsequently discussed it in an encyclopedia of the errors of his time entitled *Elenchos*. According to this source, Alcibiades related that Elchasai, living in the land of the Parthians, had received this book from an angel of gigantic size and had transmitted it to his immediate disciple, one Sobiai. This event was said to have occurred “in the third year of Trajan’s reign,” or the year 100 of our era.

Elchasai, whom Epiphanius declared to be a Jew by both birth and religious upbringing, had become head of a new community by rejecting the forms of worship and the social basis of the Hebrew religion, namely, the bloody sacrifice instituted by the patriarchs and perpetuated in Passover practice, in the course of which the sacrificial animal’s throat was cut and its carcass roasted on the altar. As a consequence, all forms of meat were excluded from the Elchasaitic diet.

While rejecting the institution and practice of sacrifice, Elchasai, who called himself “just,” scrupulously observed the letter of the [Jewish] law in other matters: circumcision and strict monotheism, as well as (even though the heresiologists claimed otherwise) rejection of divination and astrology, respect for the sacerdotal institution and for Jerusalem as the

direction of prayer [*qibla*], observance of the Sabbath and of fasts, explicit approval of marriage, and distrust of the various forms of continence practiced in other Jewish sects.

Holding fire to be a diabolical instrument of the vulgar traditions of the old religion, Elchasai made water a thaumaturgic instrument of the new religion, saying:

My children, do not go near to the appearance of fire lest you be led into error, for fire is only wrongdoing. You see it right in front of you when it is very far away! Take care then not to go near its appearance, follow instead the voice of the water!

Elchasaitic legalism consisted, then, in substituting for the sacrificial and deadly fire of Judaism the life-giving water of Palestinian baptist communities. The rite of initiation into the religion involved baptism for the forgiveness of sins, the catechumen being plunged fully dressed into the running waters of an outdoor stream. This baptismal epiclesis was accompanied by the invocation of elements endowed with therapeutic properties: water, earth, wind, oil, and salt (the last two occupying the place left vacant by fire).

The rite automatically entailed the pardon of all sins and consecrated the initiate's repentance, in other words, his conversion and his change of life. But it also, and above all, had a direct, curative effect on the body. For the moral purity that it conferred was itself only a consequence of the essentially physical and corporeal effect of word and gesture. The purpose of the rite was therefore to clean the body and to heal it of its maladies by delivering it from the evil demons that had possessed it. "If a man, a woman, or a child is bitten by a rabid dog," declares a fragment preserved in the *Elenchos*, "let him at that very moment run toward a river or an abundant spring, let him immerse himself in it fully dressed and confidently invoke great and most high God!" Consumptives and the demonically possessed were prescribed a treatment consisting of baths to be taken in cold water "forty times in seven days."

The regime of corporeal ablutions, whether these were performed on a daily basis or in accordance with the liturgical calendar, was supplemented by a second baptismal code, likewise very strict, that called for all authorized foods (coming exclusively from the ovens and gardens of

the community) to be baptized, or cleansed by immersion in water, before being consumed. “Pagan” foods, by contrast, were purely and simply taboo.

Grafted onto this essentially Jewish legalistic practice, and combined with it, were the prophetology of the apocalypticists and the christology of the sayings [*logia*] of Jesus. Though the fact of Elchasaitic Christianity, which regarded Jesus as the last of a series of Christs or messiahs descended from Adam, is undeniable, it differed profoundly from the one that Paul of Tarsus succeeded in imposing. For whereas Paul broke with the world of Jewish observances for tactical reasons, Elchasai remained a Judeo-Christian in the strict sense: a Christian practicing the kind of Jewish life that had been fixed once and for all by the prescriptions of the Torah.

By the beginning of the second century of our era, Elchasaitic Judeo-Christianity was firmly established in Transjordan and very active in Arabia. At the beginning of the third century, when Mani’s father joined one of its Babylonian communities, Alcibiades of Apamea became its proponent in Rome. In the middle of the same century, Origen noted its “recent” progress in Palestine under Philip the Arab (244–49). In the following century, Epiphanius, an authority on religious movements in Palestine and Syria, noted that the baptist communities of Jordan had almost everywhere been assimilated by Elchasaitism. It was therefore a powerful movement. Some six hundred years later, Ibn al-Nadim, writing in the fourth century of the Hegira, confirmed its continuing presence under the name Mughtasila in the marshlands of Mesopotamia.

Call of the Angel

For the first twenty-five years of his life, Mani was an adherent of Elchasaitic baptism. When Mani was four his father brought him to the rural community of Dastumisan. One of Mani’s first disciples, Salmaios, reported (*CMC* 11–12) that his master had confided in him the following:

It was then [at the age of four] that I entered the religion of the baptists, in which I was brought up. Owing to the youth of my body, I was protected by the strength of the angels of light and the very mighty powers

who were charged by Jesus [= Jesus the Splendor] with watching over me. . . . Thus it was that from the fourth year until the moment when I reached the maturity of my body I was kept safe in the hands of the most holy angels and powers of holiness.

This testimony is no doubt an idealized reconstruction. Having become a member of the Elchasaitic baptist community in early childhood, Mani is said to have been raised by a convert, his father, who awakened his religious sensitivity to the daily practices of the sect and to the marvelous sayings that were recounted about Jesus. Everything suggests that Mani's childhood was modeled on that of Jesus.

In the *Athar al-Biruni* twice affirms that, in the chapter of the *Shabuhra-gan* entitled "On the Coming of the Prophet," Mani says that revelation [*al-wahy*] came to him during his thirteenth year. Al-Biruni concludes from this that it was in the year 539 of the astronomers of Babylonia, two years after the beginning of the reign of Ardashir, king of kings. Ibn al-Nadim, for his part, declares in the *Fihrist*: "When he had attained twelve years of age, there came to him the revelation: it was, according to him, from the king of the paradise of light. The angel bearing this revelation was called al-Tawm, a Nabataean word meaning companion."

The event would therefore have occurred in 228 of our era, in the second year of the reign of Ardashir, as al-Biruni says more correctly in another passage of his chronology. *Keph.* 1 places the event in "the same year when Artaxoos [Ardashir] was to receive the crown." The name of the heavenly messenger is Aramaic: *tawma* = Gr *suzugos* [*CMC* (*saish* in the Coptic texts)]. *Keph.* 1 calls him *paraclētos* ("The living paraclete came down to me and conversed with me"), recalling the language of John 14:26.

In connection with the training of the future prophet, one encounters the legendary accounts of Syriac Christianity concerning the apostle Thomas, whose name signifies the "twin" (he was, or passed for, the twin brother of Jesus) and toward whom all forms of piety were nourished by the various Gospels and Acts current in the East during this period. Onto the traditional schema, Paraclete → Jesus × Thomas, the son of Patteg was to graft the secret of his vision: Paraclete → Jesus × Thomas → Mani.

For twelve years Mani allowed his secret to ripen—or, rather, the secrets [*musteria*] revealed to him by his heavenly companion—and, little by little, entered into conflict with his earthly companions, the Elchasaïtes. This initial period of conflict concluded, according to the liturgical account of Manichaean tradition, with a second and solemn visit from the angel al-Tawm. The *CMC* relates the event in these terms:

At the time when my body had reached its development, unexpectedly there descended and appeared before me this very beautiful and sublime mirror of myself. When I was twenty-four years old, the year when Dariadaxar [Ardashir] the king of Persia subdued the city of Atra [Hatra] and when the king Sapoires [Shapur I] his son was crowned with the very great diadem, in the month of Pharmouthi on the eighth day of the moon, the most blessed Lord took pity upon me and called me to his grace. He sent me from there my twin [*suzugon mou*]. . . . When therefore [my twin] came, he released me and took me away from the world of that Law in which I had been brought up. Thus it is that [the Lord] called, chose, and separated me from the midst of those people.

Here again the desired concordance of dates served Mani's theological and missionary purpose. The second epiphany of the angel coincided, within the space of a few days, with three successive events: the investiture of Shapur I as coregent with his father, Ardashir I (1 Nisan 551 in the Seleucid calendar = 12 April 240); the full moon that occurred on the thirteenth day of the same month; and Mani's twenty-fourth birthday (8 Nisan = 14 April). Mani was therefore entering his twenty-fifth year, as the extract from the homily of Baraïes conserved in the *CMC* confirms.

This concordance satisfied an apologetic need to demonstrate the alignment of three worlds, astrological, political, and prophetic: a new time, a new king, a new prophet. Underlying this coincidence was, if not flattery, at least a discreet appeal addressed to the new *shahanshah*. If Mani wrote the message of the revelation he had received in the language of the king and for the king, it is because he hoped that the reign that had just begun would be placed in the service of the new religion.

Anti-Elchasaite Controversies

Mani was to develop his plans for a new religion in a manner consistent with the religion of his time and place and, at the same time, in contradiction to it. But here again one needs to take into account the idealization of his life, which was promoted no less by Mani himself than by his biographers. Just as Mani was portrayed in childhood as copying the child Jesus, so Mani as a young man disputing with the authorities of his community imitated the role of Jesus as a young man in the anti-Judaizing controversies reported by the synoptic Gospels. Nonetheless, this part of the biography, even allowing for embellishment, stands out as the historically most recent and most certain element contributed by the CMC.

Mani's disputes with the Elchasaites bore not only on the baptismal practices applied to fruits and vegetables but on all the observances and prescriptions of the religion. "I questioned them about the way of God," Mani declares in a saying ascribed to the authority of Baraies (the Abrahaya of Arab tradition), "and the commandments of the Savior."

The Elchasaite custom of baptizing foods prompted the future prophet to resort to irony. Mani's argument was one of simple common sense. To subject food to baptismal cleansing eliminates neither blood nor bile nor gas nor excrement; only abstinence can diminish the quantity of waste [*apedumata*]: "Let someone partake of food that has been ritually washed and purified, and then partake of what has not been so washed, it is plain that the effect on the beauty and strength of the body is the same. Similarly, the excrement and residue of the two sorts of food cannot be perceived to differ in any way from one another. Therefore, food that has been ritually washed, which the body evacuates and expels, does not differ from any other unbaptized food" (CMC 82).

Mani explained to his interlocutors that bathing and ablutions confer no purity whatever. He showed them that the Savior, Jesus, did not say a word about such practices in his "commandments," that the body, by its nature impure, cannot be cleansed by water. "The purity of which the Scripture [= Jesus] speaks is that purity which comes from knowing how to separate light from darkness, death from life, clear waters from

clouded waters. . . . This is the most righteous purity that you have been commanded to practice" (*CMC* 84–85).

Such remarks aroused murmurs and suspicion in certain quarters; in others, respect and admiration. Some of his supporters considered him a religious leader; others, a prophet; still others, a visionary favored with a secret revelation. His opponents regarded him as the anti-Christ and the false prophet announced by tradition, a fomenter of schisms who deserved to be put to death: "He is the enemy of our Law! He wishes to go among the pagans and eat [Greek] bread. For we have heard him say: It is right to partake of [Greek] bread" (*CMC* 87). Favorable and unfavorable reactions alike drew inspiration from New Testament accounts of the identity of Jesus and the counts of indictment brought against him by the Jews of Palestine.

The disturbances and schisms caused by Mani's zealousness as an anti-establishment preacher forced the community's religious leader, Sitaïos, to convene the council of elders, which decided to ask Mani's father to explain the behavior of his son. Patteg listened to his son's accusers and then, declining all responsibility, answered in the fashion of the parents of the man in the gospel who had been born blind (John 9:21): "Summon him yourselves and try to make him see reason!" (*CMC* 90).

When Mani appeared in his turn before the presbyterial assembly, his judges praised first his virtues: "Since your childhood you have been among us and you have tirelessly persevered in the prescriptions and observances of our Law. What has happened to you now, what vision have you had? For you oppose yourself to our Law, you overturn and abolish our religion [*dogma*]. The path you take is different from ours" (*CMC* 90–91). Mani was then accused of rejecting the rites of purification, the commandments of the Savior, the dietary prohibitions against wheat bread and vegetables, and agricultural labor.

Mani's response was, first, to show that in all his words and actions he was only following the example of Jesus, who had blessed bread, eaten with publicans and sinners, shared meals with Martha and Mary, and sent his disciples on missions equipped with neither millstone nor baking dish, only a single article of clothing: "Observe then that the disciples of the Savior ate bread that came from women and idolaters and that they made no distinction between this and that bread, any more than between

this and that vegetable, and in order to eat they did not concern themselves with either laboring with their hands or working the land, as you do today” (CMC 93).

Having pointed out the contradiction between the practice of the baptists and the actions of Jesus, Mani went on to say that baptists contradicted their own tradition. His first apothegms illustrated the conduct of Elchasai himself, the founder of the law.

Going out one day to bathe, Elchasai saw in the waters a human figure and heard it moan and say that it had been injured by the daily baths of animals and men. Elchasai went away, and then another day, when he sought to wash his body in a puddle of water, once again the human image appeared to him, saying: “We and the waters of the sea are one. You have come to commit in this very place a sin and to injure us.” Elchasai was persuaded by these words and, the text adds, let “the mud dry on his head” (CMC 96).

Just as he did not practice ablutions, Elchasai did not devote himself to agricultural labor. One day when he was learning to use a plough to work the land, he heard the earth groan. He then took a clod of the earth that had spoken to him, wept, kissed it, and placed it on his breast, saying: “Here is the flesh and blood of my Lord” (CMC 97). On another occasion, when his disciples were cooking bread, Elchasai heard the bread speak to him and then ordered his disciples to cease their cooking.

Even if Mani’s diatribe against Elchasaism in the names of Jesus and of Elchasai himself, as related by the CMC, was a piece of self-justification composed after the fact from proselytical necessity, it nonetheless gives us a good sense of the tense atmosphere that reigned in the baptist community at the time when Mani claimed to have been visited by his celestial companion.

The Seal of the Prophets

The second appearance of the angel al-Tawm in the idealized biography of Mani marks both a rupture with Elchasaism and the ecclesiastical birth of Manichaeism. Ibn al-Nadim reports the event in these terms in the *Fihrist*: “When he had finished his twenty-fourth year, al-Tawm came to him, saying: ‘The time has now come for you to manifest yourself

[*kharaja*] in order to announce your power.”” The Muslim compiler then cites a logion, no doubt extracted by his source from the *Shabuhrgan*, in which the angel solemnly proclaims Mani’s epiphany and commands him to undertake a mission: “Peace unto you, Mani, from me and from the Lord who sent me to you. He has elected you to his apostolate, and so it is your mission to call [the peoples] to your truth. You shall proclaim the gospel of truth [*bushra al-haqq*] in his name and devote yourself to this task with all your strength.” The end of Mani’s attachment to the religion of his childhood and the beginning of his apostolate as the founder of a new religion were formulated in the language of visions popularized by the apocalyptic style of the day. Such language provided the sole possible scriptural basis for asserting the authenticity of religious reform during this period.

On the theological content of Mani’s apostolate, al-Biruni reports in the *Athar* a logion taken from the first part of the *Shabuhrgan*:

Wisdom [*hikma*] and knowledge [*a’mal* in the manuscript, corrected to read *’ilm*] are what the apostles of God constantly bring in one period after another. Thus [these things] appeared in one of the [past] centuries through the apostle called al-Bidada [Buddha] in the lands of India, and in another through Zaradasht [Zoroaster] in the lands of Persia, and in another through ‘Isa [Jesus] in the lands of the West. Then in the present century there came down this revelation and appeared this prophecy through me, Mani, sent by the God of truth in the lands of Babel.

Following the example of the heroes of the apocalypses read in Judeo-Christian circles, Mani presented himself as the executor of a heavenly revelation. He went on to clarify the object of this revelation—namely, his decision to found a new religion—employing the eschatological language of the Gospels: nearness of the end of time, manifestation of this end through the announcement of good news, and election to the apostolate, that is, the gathering into a church of those who are prepared to welcome the good news transmitted by the chosen apostle. On all these points Mani imitated Jesus’ consciously messianic decision to travel throughout Palestine, spreading the good news of the imminent coming of the kingdom of God and sending forth twelve disciples in his turn (“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who

Figure 1. List of the Prophets or Apostles of Humanity

<i>Ps. 142-3</i>	<i>Hom. III</i>	<i>CMC 48-63</i>	<i>Keph. I</i>	<i>M 42</i>	<i>Chinese Compendium</i>	<i>Giants</i>	<i>M 299a</i>	<i>Ibn al-Murtada</i>	<i>al-Shahrastani</i>	<i>al-Biruni</i>	<i>'Abd al-Jabbar</i>
Adam Seth Enos Noah Sem Enoch	Adam Enos Sem Enoch	Adam Seth Enos Sem Enoch	Adam Seth Enos Enoch			Seth	Shem/Sem Enos Enoch	Adam Seth Noah	Adam Seth Noah		Adam Seth
			Noah Sem						Abraham Buddha Zoroaster the Messiah Paul Muhammad	Buddha Zoroaster Jesus Mani	Zoroaster Buddha Jesus Mani
Jesus Paul Mani	Jesus Paul Zoroaster Buddha Mani	Paul Mani	Buddha Zoroaster Jesus Paul Mani	Zarathustra Buddha Jesus	Lao-tzu Buddha Mani	Zarathustra Buddha Christ		Buddha Zoroaster Jesus Mani			

sent me” [Matthew 10:40]). The undertakings of Mani and of Jesus were identical: prophetic awareness is inherently missionary.

Nonetheless, the prophetic acts of the two were profoundly different. To distinguish himself from John the Baptist, who announced repentance by a baptism of water, the Jesus of the Gospels preached the good news of a “baptism of fire” through the dispatch of a paraclete, or intercessor: the Holy Ghost. The good news that Mani claimed to have been assigned the mission of spreading (he was the same age as Jesus was, according to the Gospels, when Jesus received his calling) was no longer to announce a hope but to say that this hope was fulfilled—that the hope announced by Jesus had been realized in him, Mani. Indeed, in the *Gospel*, which he composed using the twenty-two letters of the Aramaic alphabet, Mani expressly said (according to al-Biruni in the *Athar*) that “he is the Paraclete announced by Christ and that he is the seal of the prophets.”

The doctrine of the seal of prophecy is a fundamental aspect of Judeo-Christianity in the strict sense of the term, and the young Mani was as familiar with it as the young Jesus was familiar with Jewish messianic thought.

But Mani did not take his prophetological doctrine from Elchasaism alone. In fact, if Judeo-Christianized baptism recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy and of the salvation heralded by the earliest apostles and sages of humanity, that is, by the heroes of the mythical ethnohistory of the Jews (essentially Adam and the major Sethites, by contrast with the Cainites, makers of tools and sowers of disorder), it thereby restricted its theology of the history of salvation solely to what was contained in the Jewish legends, from Adam to Shem, son of Noah. The profound alteration that Mani made to the received prophetological schema followed from his refusal to interpret it from either the Jewish or Judeo-Christian point of view. On the one hand, he extended this schema to the entire inhabited earth [*oikoumenē*]; on the other, he made it converge upon himself.

The previous table (fig. 1) listing the prophets recorded in the Manichaean literature and in Muslim heresiography needs to be supplemented by a diagram (fig. 2) showing Mani’s own position in relation to these prophets at the time of his break with Elchasaism:

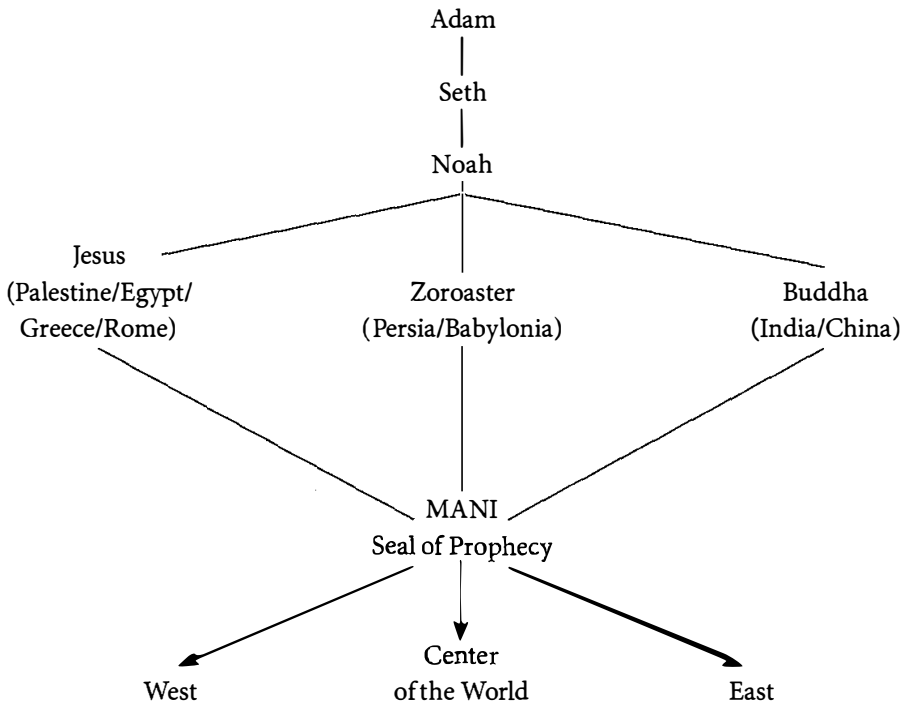


Figure 2.

Mani expressed the spirit of such an arrangement for the first time in the *Shabuhragan*, and later he explicitly referred to it in the *Book of Giants*. If the legendary names transmitted by Genesis go unmentioned in the *Shabuhragan*, this was a tactical omission motivated by the fact that the monarch to whom Mani had dedicated his book was unacquainted with Jewish culture. Moreover, in restricting himself to the founders of the three great world religions, the prophet sought to suggest to the king of Iran that his new reign, devoted to the political domination of the world, coincided *with* and would be facilitated *by* the institution of a universal religion founded by one of Shapur's own subjects, the spiritual heir to Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus. This prophetology, carrying with it all the wisdom and knowledge of the world [MP *xrad ud danishn*], that is, of these three sages of the ancient oral tradition, was at the very heart of Mani's doctrine. The originality of Manichaeism is not dualism as a dogmatic construction—this was to be the achievement of his disciples—but the fact that it elaborated an ecclesiology based on a universalist prophetology.

The resolutely anti-Elchasaitic (and therefore anti-Judaic) character of such a prophetology can be seen first in the exclusion of all the representatives of historical Jewish nationalism from its statement of ecclesiastical purpose. The mention of Abraham (as of Muhammad) in the list given by al-Shahrastani [in *Kitab al-Milal*] was plainly due to the Muslim heresiologist himself, influenced as he surely was by the Koranic list of the messengers of God, the title of seal of the prophets being attributed by the Koran to the founder of Islam.

Anti-Elchasaism is also, and especially, apparent in the rejection of ritual and belief as norms of salvation. In the *Shabuhrgan* Mani lays down as the criterion of decision in matters of final judgment the same criterion laid down by Jesus (the text of Matthew 25:31–46 is literally and fully adopted in the *Shabuhrgan*). Salvation did not depend upon the observance of a particular practice or upon conformity to an orthodoxy—from this was to come the dogmatic malleability of cultural Manichaeism, which in all places was Christian but also just as much, depending on the area, Zoroastrian, Marcionite, Buddhist, or Taoist; the salvation of every person, whether Manichaean or non-Manichaean (Mani was addressing himself, let us not forget, to Shapur), was a consequence of the acts of mercy shown toward the “religious,” namely, the faithful of the church: “I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you cared for me. I was bound and you untied me. I was captive and you freed me. And I was exiled and wandering and you welcomed me into your homes.”

The anti-Elchasaitism (and therefore the anti-Judaism) of Manichaean ecclesiology may be seen finally in the mention, by both Jesus and Mani, of the apostle Paul. This detail is quite obviously absent from the *Shabuhrgan*, but the direct Manichaean sources (*Kephalaia*, *CMC*, *Homily III* [= *Hom.* 42.9–85.34], *Psalm Book*), compiled following Mani’s death, all mention the name of Paul. It is certain that Mani himself, confronted at the end of his life by the fierce repression ordered by the Mazdean (Zoroastrian) authorities and approved by the imperial court, likened his own fate to that of all the persecuted prophets—Jesus, of course, but also his disciples, in particular Paul and the first Christian martyrs (the Manichaean *Psalm Book* gives the names of several of these).

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that Mani’s Pauline sympathies were belated or in any way secondary. The youthful protago-

nist of the anti-Elchasaite controversies was unable to ignore someone whom his coreligionists especially detested as a destroyer of the law and whose letters and writings they had, for this reason, excluded from their own canon of writings. It is probable, therefore, that Mani became fascinated at a very young age with the personality of a man whose writings (authentic and inauthentic alike, canonical and extra-canonical) recounted at length his sudden conversion on the road to Damascus, the rapture of the third heaven, and the missionary achievements in the West. It was in Paul's school that Mani forged his vocation as a visionary and apostle. As for the five messengers—Adam, Seth, Enosh, Shem, Enoch—whose names precede that of Paul in the list given by Baraies (*CMC* 48–59), they have in common the experience of having been, like Paul, favored with visions, apparitions, and raptures that, as in the case of Paul, were recorded in writings of revelation (apocalypses) associated with their names, one or more extracts from each of which are quoted in the *Homilies*.

In sum, the decisive reasons that made Mani the founder of a new religion are of two kinds:

1. Rejection in the name of Jesus of an unbearable practice, namely, Jewish legalism, which was perpetuated in its own fashion by Elchasaite baptism, and as a consequence of this, rejection of a doctrine narrowly concerned with the strict maintenance of a practice that had become “foreign to the commandments of the Savior.”

2. Influence of the Pauline model known through the New Testament and the apocryphal literature associated with his name. With Mani this latter influence led to a thorough reworking of the first Judeo-Christian prophetology in the direction of a radically ecumenical doctrine.

Travels and Missions

Having broken with Elchasaism in the name of Jesus and Paul, Mani became an active apostle after the manner of Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ. No period of transition separated the break from the apostolate. Mani did not first conceive, in the secrecy of some retreat, a grandiose project for a new metaphysics or a new theology; nor did he seek to found a new religion by first drafting statutes. When he broke with the baptists

of Babylonia, he set out at once on the roads and the seas, for his religion propelled him forward.

Yet there are differences between the apostolates of Paul and Mani. On the one hand, there were differences of substance: Paul preached the message of a dead and living Christ, that is, Jesus as he was worshiped by the first Christian community of Jerusalem; Mani, however, preached the message of Mani, for as prophet and seal of the prophets, he identified himself with the Paraclete, or Holy Ghost, which constituted the faith and hope of the Jesus of the Gospels. On the other hand, there were differences of environment as well: Paul of Tarsus, a Jew of Greek culture and Roman citizenship, journeyed to the West and in his earliest missions made a point of introducing himself, at each town along the way, to the Jews of the local diaspora before going to meet the local Greeks; Mani, a Babylonian of Judeo-Christian culture and Iranian citizenship, set out to the East in search of the Iranian world, seeking to establish himself in the Judeo-Christian communities scattered between the Caucasus and India.

Mani, a man from the country, discovered the cities and the great commercial thoroughfares of the land. Departing from Seleucia-Ctesiphon, where he was unable to cross the Tigris on account of rising waters, Mani took refuge together with two companions at Nasēr (Nasir), near Sippar. In this, the place where he founded his religion, he announced to his father that the law of the baptists was no longer his law. The small group then crossed the river and made their way northwest toward the mountains of Media, passing through Diyala. From there they reached the mining country of Ganazak (Ganzak), south of Lake Urmiya in Azerbaijan. There Mani healed the daughter of a wealthy man and conceived the institutional embryo of his church in the form of messengers [*presbeutai* and *apostoloi*], whom he succeeded in sending into the Caucasus (Armenia and Georgia). In the centuries that followed, the official historiography of these two regions' conversion to Christianity took over from local Manichaean propaganda its characteristic themes and accounts: royal conversions obtained during a hunting expedition, healings of members of the royal family, controversies with the pagans.

As for Mani himself, he traveled onward with his father along the commercial route over which Azerbaijani tin was carried, going from Ganazak,

where this mineral was extracted and refined, as far as Pharat, the port of Mesene on the Persian Gulf, whence Arab merchants carried it to "India," that is, Deb (Daybul), in the estuary of the Indus River.

This itinerary was said to be the one that had been taken about two centuries previously by the apostle Thomas. Small Christian communities had been established along this route, up to and beyond the Strait of Hormuz. According to legend, Thomas had been reluctant at first to undertake the mission ordered by Jesus: "How can I, who am Jewish, go among the Indians?" Mani, who knew the marvelous tales surrounding the voyages of Thomas, desired of his own free will and for his own reasons to follow the route taken by his illustrious predecessor. It was, therefore, members of these Christian communities, scattered between Fars and Turan and claiming to follow the teaching of Thomas, whom Mani met in the course of his first missionary voyage. Making contact with these communities, not the study of Buddhism, was the object and purpose of this voyage.

Just as the Acts of Thomas credited Thomas with great success among the local princes and chieftains, Manichaean hagiography was to contrive an analogous missiology for Mani. A Parthian fragment (M 48) recounts Mani's success in converting the Buddhist king of Turan. Having publicly performed a feat of levitation, which led the king to acknowledge the true wisdom, Mani revealed his missionary purpose: "When the Turanshah and the notables [*azadan*] heard this, they rejoiced. They accepted the faith and showed themselves favorable to the apostle of the religion." A few members of the family and of the royal court converted in their turn. At the sight of Mani rising again into the air to take leave of him, the king fell on his knees, but Mani called to him. The Turanshah then went to meet him in the air and kissed Mani, declaring to him: "You are the Buddha!"

The brief duration of this Indian mission, at most two years, excludes any possibility of proselytism or integration in Buddhist circles. If it could hardly have led to the spectacular conversions attributed to him by Manichaean legend, it nonetheless enjoyed a certain success in Christian circles since, according to another Parthian fragment (M 4575^r), on his return to Rew-Ardaxshir Mani sent his father, Patteg, one of his first converts, and his brother John (Hanni) to look after the community he had just founded there.

On the dating of this first mission and the activity that followed, the essential details come from the Coptic *Kephalaia* (1:15–16):

In the last years of Artaxoos [Artashir] the king I set out to preach, I reached by sea [*jioire*] the country of the Indians, I preached to them the hope of life, I elected [*sotp*] in this place a good election [= community, church]. Yet in the year when Artaxoos the king died and Saporess [Shapur] his son became king, I went back by sea from the country of the Indians to the land of the Persians, and again from the land of Persis I reached the land of Babylon, Mesene, and the region of Susa. I presented myself to Saporess the king. He received me with great honor and gave me permission to travel through his territories and to preach there the word of life. I spent some years in the royal retinue [*komitaton*], some years in Persis, in the country of the Parthians, [and] as far [north] as Adiabene and the borderlands of the kingdom of the Romans.

Kephalaia 76, on the voyages of Mani, describes the circumstances of his meeting with Shapur I and gives a summary account of the missions directed by Mani:

Further, it happened one day, while our master and luminous enlightener Mani was living in the city of Ctesiphon, that Saporess the king inquired after him and summoned him to come. Our master set out and went to Saporess the king, then came back and went to his church. When he had been there for not quite an hour, without delaying any longer Saporess the king inquired after him again, summoned him to come, and [our master] set out again; once again he went to Saporess the king, spoke with him, proclaimed the word of God to him, and then returned and went to his church. Yet a third time Saporess the king inquired after him and bade him to come, and [our master] returned to the king once more. . . . [Then Mani himself declared:] At the moment when I sailed upon the sea by boat . . . I stirred the whole land of the Indians [period of success followed by setbacks due to opposition from the political authorities]; I took to the sea once more. I left the land of the Indians and reached the land of Persis. . . . [success, then setbacks]; I came out from the land of Persis and reached the city of Mesene, which . . . [there is a gap in the text here; success once again followed by reverses]; from this place I came to the land of Babylon, the city of the Assyrians. . . . [success followed by setbacks due mainly to the authorities of the “dogmata,” that is, the Zo-

roastrian and Christian clergies]. This country waged against me a host of struggles. This is why I quit the Assyrians and went into the land of the Medes and Parthians. In this place I played the harp of wisdom.

Comparing these two texts with what is known from other sources, a few observations can be made. It was very probably at the beginning of A.D. 243 that the Indian mission came to an end in Turan. There as everywhere else Mani knew success as well as reverses but nonetheless managed to establish a community ("elect an election") at Deb. The Parthian fragment (M 4575^r) and *Keph.* 1 agree on this point. Mani came back from Turan by sea following the same route he took in setting out. On his return he settled at Rew-Ardaxshir in the province of Persis (Fars).

From there he made many voyages through Persis, crisscrossing Susiana, Mesene, Babylonia, and the "Cities" (Seleucia-Ctesiphon). In all these places he entered into controversies with his former baptist coreligionists. His new recruits, Ammo, Adda, and Sis, were educated Aramaeans and polyglot city dwellers. They were to become his closest collaborators. Once he had established contacts with Iranian and Zoroastrian dignitaries and with the royal princes and provincial governors in their lands, the Prophet did not record spectacular conversions, as later Manichaean historiography recounts, but formed instead relationships based upon trust. One such relationship was with Peroz, a "brother" of the king, through whom Mani obtained an audience at the palace and, in 253, a guarantee of safe passage for him and his disciples. The meeting with the king of kings was interpreted by the Manichaeans, wrongly, as constituting official recognition of their religion: one such tradition, recorded by Ibn al-Nadim, describes the entry of the prophet into the reception hall as that of a radiant Buddha ("there were on his shoulders two lights like lamps").

Having now settled on the west bank of the Tigris at Veh-Ardaxshir, a part of Ctesiphon, Mani composed for the king a summary of the principles of his religion (the *Shabuhraḡan*), drew up the definitive statutes of his church, and organized the missions of his disciples "to the four regions of the world." To the West—that is, to Palmyra and Egypt, the first stages on the road to Rome—he sent Adda and Patteg; to the Northeast (Parthia and Khurasan) he sent Ammo, who was to reach Abarshahr (Nishapur), Merv, and the territory of the Kushans. Other missions must have been

dispatched at this time, accounts of which have not come down to us: into northeast Arabia (Hatta) but also to the caravan settlements of the Southwest as far as the end of the Arabian Peninsula.

Mani himself assumed responsibility for the Northwest. He went first into Bet(h)-Garmai and Adiabene, where he gave encouragement to the already existing community founded by Adda and Abzakhuya (Abzaxya) the Persian at Karnuk, and with other brethren he established several new communities in the region of Mosul, then going on to Bet(h)-'Arabaye and Tur 'Abdin, that is (in the words of *Keph.* 1), "to the borderlands of the kingdom of the Romans." From 264 to 270 Mani found himself in the very heart of Syriac Christianity.

By 270 Mani's religion was established throughout Iran; outside this country the network of missions extended, as Mani says in *Keph.* 1, "from East to West," and he adds, "My hope [*elpis*—a synonym for church] has reached as far as the sunrise of the world and in all parts of the inhabited lands, to the clime of the North and to the South. Not one of the apostles [who preceded me] did ever achieve such a thing." By virtue of this, Mani—who in *Keph.* 76 declares that he had traveled throughout the world "running" (literally, on the tips of his toes)—may be considered to have succeeded in thirty years of peregrinations in carrying out to the letter Jesus's command: "Go to the four regions [*klimata*] of the world."

The missiology of the four *klimata*, which formed the conclusion to the collections of evangelical pericopes and the basis for the apocryphal traditions of the apostles from which Mani derived it, is the ecclesiastical and practical side of Manichaean prophetology—the very heart of Manichaeism as Mani conceived it, formulated it, and experienced it. In a fragment in Pahlavi (M 5794), Mani laid out a series of ten reasons the religion that he had "elected" [*wizidan*] was superior, and to be preferred, to all the ones that had come before. The first of these reasons, which Mani continually emphasized to his disciples, is of cardinal importance: "The preceding religions were [spread in] a single land and a single language. But my religion is such that it is manifest [*paydag*] in every land and in every language and is taught in distant lands."

This is not an isolated text. A passage in the Coptic *Kephalaia* (154)

admirably summarizes Mani's ecclesiastical and missionary purpose in similar terms:

He [Jesus] who elected his church in the West, his church has not reached the East. He [Buddha] who elected his church in the East, his election [*eklogē*] has not come to the West. My hope is to administer [my church] in such a way that it reaches the West and that it may be carried at the same time to the East. And the voice of its preaching will be heard in every language, and it will be announced in every city. My church is superior, in this primary respect, to preceding churches, for the preceding churches were elected only for particular places and particular cities. I administer my church in such a way that it comes to all cities and that its good news reaches all countries.

The Last Years

When Shapur I died (ca. 272–73), Mani made the Sassanid capital the fief of his religion and established a network of communities not only in the cities of the empire but in its most remote regions. In principle, Iran might wake up one morning to find itself Manichaean if the king of kings should so decide. But this did not in fact come to pass, for Ardashir's son and son-in-law had remained Zoroastrian, which is to say that they maintained the state religion under the control of the priests of fire.

Mani, like all religious leaders, recognized that the success of a mission and the future of a church depend on political will. With the accession of Hormizd (Ohrmizd) I to the throne of his father, Shapur, he hastened to make his way to the capital.

It is unlikely that Mani waited for events to develop. Almost certainly he devoted himself at once to intrigues at court, and this all the more easily as he was close to members of the royal family and palace officials. Initially he would have been reassured of the new king's good intentions toward him, Hormizd having pledged to continue his father's policy of tolerance. But Hormizd's reign suddenly came to an end after only a few months (late in 273?), without the decisive change of status Mani sought for his religion being approved in the interval.

The status quo was maintained during the first months of the reign of

Hormizd's brother and successor, Bahram (Vahram) I, whom A. Christensen has depicted as "greedy for power and irresolute." Little by little Bahram let real power pass into the hands of the official clergy, in particular, one of its leading figures, a Zoroastrian prelate named Karder (also Kirdir or Karter).

Karder had not awaited Bahram's reign in order to judge Mani the man and his work. Priest and teacher of the Zoroastrian religion in the *comitatus* (court) of Shapur I, Karder would have been in an ideal position to assist the birth and expansion of this new religion, which claimed to bring together under its banner Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus. Surely it must very quickly have aroused his suspicions, as the head priest of fire [*herbed*] in the Persis region, to see Mani wooing the king, successfully rallying to his cause some of the royal princes and provincial governors, and infiltrating the imperial administration—in short, scheming with the evident purpose of one day supplanting the traditional religion and becoming the sole minister of an official cult having no rivals that had come, in the final analysis, from abroad.

Karder's inscription, found on "Ka'ba-i Zardusht" at Naqsh-i Rostam, near the site of ancient Persepolis, expressly notes that he was promoted (or rather promoted himself) from *herbed* to *mobed*, that is, to a position at the summit of the Zoroastrian hierarchy, which under the reigns of Ardashir's grandsons laid claim to the status of orthodoxy. Karder mentioned, among his many self-professed services to religion, the following:

I caused many fires [= fire temples] and magi to prosper in the country of Iran; and likewise, in the lands of Aniran, I [caused to prosper] the fires and magi who were in the lands of Aniran, whither came horses and men of the king of kings: [from] the city of Antioch, and the country of Syria and what is beyond Syria, the city of Tarsus and the country of Cilicia, and what is beyond the country of Cilicia, and beyond Cappadocia, toward the country of Galatia and the country of Armenia, Iberia [= modern Georgia], Albania, and Balasakan, as far as the border of Albania—Shapur, king of kings, by his horses and his men, pillaged, burned, and wrought devastation, even there, I myself, on the order of the king of kings, I organized the fires and magi who were in these countries. I forbade looting, and the booty that had been seized I restored to these countries. The magi

who were good I gave rank and authority in the country. As for heretical or degenerate men in the body of the magi who led an unsuitable life, I made them submit to punishment and reprimand. They mended their ways and I drew up charters and patents for many fires and magi. Thanks to the support of the gods and of the king of kings, I founded in Iranshahr many fires, and I made many marriages between blood relations; many men who did not profess [the faith] professed it, and many of those who held the doctrine of the demons, thanks to my action, abandoned the doctrine of the demons, and adopted the doctrine of the gods. [After the translation by J. de Menasce]

Accompanying Shapur to the borderlands of the empire and beyond, Karder reestablished Zoroastrian orthodoxy and strict law in all the areas pacified by the soldiers. In the same places, during the same period, in the same circumstances, in the same royal entourage, Mani too had occasion to profit from pacification in order to preach his “hope” and to establish his own institutions. The Sassanid conquest seems, then, to have been followed by a dual mission in opposite directions: on the one hand, a centripetal movement—Karder’s reform—aimed at shoring up an orthodoxy that could only decay and crumble under the influence of foreign contact; and on the other, the centrifugal force of a “heresy”—Mani’s prophetology—that could only be strengthened by foreign contact. In the ideological combat in which the two visionaries engaged during Shapur’s time, it was Karder who gradually achieved control of political power. Under the reign of Bahram I, this control seemed very nearly total.

Mani’s only alternative at this point was to quit the stage where the policy of the great actors of the Iranian world was destined to play itself out without him and against him. He knew now that he had lost in a merciless game and, moreover, that his life was lost. It is in the context of this painful period that the pessimistic and dualistic radicalization of Manichaeic lyric poetry and homiletics ought, in my view, to be situated, as well as the composition of Mani’s own version of the *Book of Giants*. In this narrative, behind the veil of the language of a biblical tale popularized by the most celebrated of the apocalypses (*Enoch*), he recounted the misdeeds of tyrants [*kawan*] and prophesied their decline and fall.

Mani’s last travels were to bring him back to the places of his child-

hood, his youth, and the birth of his church. Thus he visited first the communities of Babylonia and welcomed back from their missions the brethren of his faith, giving them letters, documents, and instructions. By small stages he reached Hormizd-Ardaxshir (Suq al-Ahwaz), in the province of Susiana (Khuzistan), with the intention (the testimony of the Coptic *Homilies* is definite on this point) of undertaking a long voyage to Khurasan. This would have brought him to the Kushan territory, where Ammo had gone previously as a scout and whose many Manichaean institutions had made a fief of the faith. But his plan could not be carried out. Mani was stopped by the imperial police and forbidden from going farther. He returned to Mesene and traveled upriver by boat to Ctesiphon.

He went on to Kholassar (Artemita), halfway between Baghdad and Dastagerd, about fifty-five miles from Seleucia. A minor prince of Kholassar by the name of Bat was one of his recent converts. It was there that the order reached Mani to go to Beth-Lapat (also Belapat or Gundeshabuhr) in Susiana to appear before the king. W. B. Henning plausibly sees the conversion of Bat, one of Bahram's vassals, as the direct cause of the king's anger and of the decision to summon Mani.

Bat accompanied Mani at least until Gaukhai (also Jukhi or Jukha), home to an important Manichaean community, in Beth-Deraye. A local popular tradition, recorded by Ibn al-Nadim, later made Gaukhai the prophet's birthplace, no doubt in memory of his farewell visit made there.

Mani arrived finally at Beth-Lapat in the company of his dragoman Nuhzadag (bar-Nuh), Abzakhuya (Abzaxya) the Persian, and Kustai. The police led the group at once to the royal residence. Warned of Mani's arrival, Karder in his turn informed the king's aide-de-camp, who warned Bahram, now dining on his return from a hunting party: "Mani is here; he waits at the door." Bahram had him instruct Mani to wait a moment. Mani returned to the guardhouse at the entrance to the building. Having finished his meal, Bahram got up from the table and, arm in arm with the queen of Sakas and Karder, joined Mani. A dialogue ensued:

BAHRAM: You are not welcome!

MANI: What wrong have I done?

BAHRAM [evasively]: I swore not to let you enter this land. [Then, in a flood of words (as the Coptic *Homilies* say), his face twisted with anger and contempt, he continued:] Ah, what are you good for? You are neither a soldier nor a hunter. Perhaps you are needed to administer drugs and medicines? But you are not capable even of that!

MANI: I have done nothing wrong. I have always acted well toward you and your family. Many are your servants whom I have delivered from demons and bewitchments; many are those whom I have healed of sickness; many are those from whom I have dispelled all sorts of fever; many are those who were dying and whom I restored to health!

BAHRAM [going straight to the point]: It is now three whole years that you have walked with Bat! What is this religion [*nomos*] that you have taught him, that he should end up abandoning our [priests] [= the Zoroastrian clergy] and follow yours? How do you explain that? Why did you not go with him where I had ordered you to go?

The king's true motives are to be found in this exchange. For Bahram and his minister of worship, Bat's conversion was intolerable. Furthermore, Mani had not complied with the sentence of house arrest, which must have been communicated to him on his return from Hormizd-Ardaxshir to Ctesiphon, probably somewhere near the capital.

At this point no possible means of escape were left to Mani, and it is very doubtful that a debate on theological issues ensued, as the account of the interview given in the Coptic *Homilies* (*Hom.* 42.9–50.17) would have one believe.

Mani, no longer having anything to lose, then remarked that Bahram's attitude stood in contradiction to that of his father, Shapur, who had shown himself attentive to Mani's every need and gave written evidence of his respect for him. Proof to hand, Mani read a letter that Shapur had addressed to him. This was too much! Mani was put in irons at once. Fettered with more than one hundred pounds of chains—one chain around his neck, three around his ankles, and three more around his wrists—he had just enough strength to receive his disciples and confide to them a final message. Exhausted after a few days of detention, he died.

The canonical month of Mani's passion ("crucifixion"), recorded in the Coptic *Homilies*, is a sanctification of the period of punishment invented by tradition (four days of trial plus twenty-six of detention), not a reli-

able historical chronology. Moreover, it is difficult to know what became of Mani's corpse. Was it dismembered? Flayed? Stuffed with straw and publicly displayed? Torn apart by wild beasts? Decapitated and the head stuck atop one of the gates to the city? Cut in two and then nailed to both gates? All these details may be found in Manichaean hagiography, which mixes together all known facts and hearsay concerning the great martyr. Al-Biruni, ordinarily so forthcoming in the matter of dates and calendars, is mute with regard to the date of Mani's death, embarrassed perhaps by the silence or disagreement of his sources. The references to months, days, and hours contained in the documents that have come down to us from central Asia constitute no more than a calendar for liturgical use. The year of Mani's death remains a disputed question. A Uighur Manichaean chronology, based on the Sino-Turkic Calendar of the Twelve Animals, fixes "the departure of the Buddha Mani for his celestial place" in the year of the pig, that is, 274 of the Christian era. Theoretically possible later dates (276 or 277) can be obtained by attempting to reconcile local or international calendars with Manichaean conventions for designating feast days. Mani was in any case about sixty years old when he died.

The Books

What Mani Read

As a consequence of the religious training customarily undergone by someone of his social background, Mani had access at a very early age to the New Testament writings—the four Gospels and the Epistles of Paul—through an eastern Aramaic translation. He also knew the four Gospels in a diatessarial, or harmonized, form. Gospel fragments cited in Latin by the African doctors of the Manichaean Church during their exegetical jousts with Augustine, as well as fragments of Jesus' parabolic narratives found at Turfan, show that a harmonized form of the Gospels was also used by disciples at the two extremities of Manichaeism's geographical expanse. Analysis of these fragments reveals that this harmony did not derive from Tatian's *Diatessaron* and, moreover, that it existed in several versions.

Owing to his Elchasaitic background, Mani had also become familiar with the writings that were read in the baptist community, not only the book of revelations that had been confided to Elchasai, but also, as he grew older, the various books of revelations and visions ascribed to the authority of the first messengers of God that were then very much in vogue in Judeo-Christian circles (the Apocalypses of Adam, Seth, Enoch, and Noah).

Mani's fascination with missionary adventure was also due to prolonged exposure to the novelistic accounts, filled in their turn with visions, voyages, and dramas, that the Aramaean Christians had built up around their favorite apostles: the apocryphal Acts of John, Peter, Paul, Andrew, and Thomas. The fate of this last apostle made a particular impression upon the young Mani for at least three reasons. First, tradition

had made Thomas, as his very name would have had it, the “twin” [*tawm*] of Jesus; second, it was to this Thomas, his twin, that Jesus had communicated his secret words (Gospel of Thomas); and it was to Thomas, finally, that Jesus had entrusted the mission of going farthest to the East, as far as India, to convert the kings and their peoples (Acts of Thomas). The legend of Thomas may be said to have determined Mani’s career; indeed, the vocation of the latter appears to have been the direct product of the belief of eastern Christianity in the exceptional destiny of the former—so much so that understanding Mani depends in large part on examining the traditions associated with the literary fiction of the apostle Thomas.

Having founded his own religion, Mani read and assimilated (as the contents of the *Book of Mysteries* testify) the philosophical treatises and collections of the sacred poems and songs of Bardesanes. It seems unlikely that he himself knew the quite recent revelations written in Greek and ascribed by the “Hellenized magi” to the Chaldean prophets: the Apocalypses of Nicotheos, Zoroaster, Zostrianos, Allogenes, and Messos. On the other hand, we know that he used the Apocalypse of Hystaspes to write the second section of his *Mysteries*. To all these writings it is necessary to add other minor writings attributed to some person or other in the Old or New Testament (cycles of legends, prayers, hymnic evocations), as well as brief but literarily autonomous pieces (catilenas, laments, and canticles from the Christian communities of Iran).

Mani seems almost surely not to have known (or to have sought to know) the text of the Jewish Bible, not even through its Targumic interpretation. What was Jewish not only did not interest him; it was a source of profound personal irritation as well. He abhorred the Pentateuch since it continued to guide his baptist brethren, who therefore remained subjugated by Jewish law—while professing to be Christians! It was the growing awareness of this contradiction that led to his rupture with Elchasaism. The only sections of the Jewish Bible that he thought worthy of notice, the first chapters of Genesis, he knew through the apocryphal traditions.

From books Mani learned to revere the knowledge that they contained, and he passed along his love of fine books to his disciples. A painter of great distinction (his name in the culture of Islamic Iran has come to symbolize beauty of the most refined kind), Mani was recognized as a master in the art of drawing letters, to which he brought the same pre-

cision and employed the same harmony as painters do in ordering the intricate interplay of lines and colors. It is too often forgotten that Manichaeism was also an aesthetic, and its founder, an artist.

From books of revelation written in cursive eastern Aramaic script Mani learned to use his mother tongue and to make of it a tool perfectly suited to the transmission of his doctrine. But in order for his own works, written in Syriac, to be accessible to an Iranian-speaking audience, they had to be translated. No Iranian idiom—neither Pahlavi, the language of the southwest, derived from Old Persian, nor Parthian, the language of the northeast, derived from Median—was sufficient to the task: on the one hand, because in each case the written language was far removed from the spoken language, on account of the very small number of signs employed (thirteen), which led to great confusion and ambiguity in the interpretation of manuscripts and the copying of texts; on the other hand, because the constant presence in Iranian texts of deformed Aramaic words for the most common notions (the so-called ideographic system) transformed the simplest text into a veritable rebus. Mani therefore undertook a drastic reform of idiomatic Iranian writing, first, by substituting the eastern Syriac alphabet (twenty-two letters with semivowels) for Pahlavi script; second, by abandoning the system of ideograms and, with it, the archaicizing bias of official copyists. In short, he sought to enable the living language to overtake the hieratic, so that Iranian would be written as it was pronounced. The instrument that resulted from this reform—customarily called the “Manichaean alphabet”—was so practical and so clear that it not only became an indispensable tool of Manichaean missions throughout the Iranian domain but was also adopted by non-Manichaeans (Sogdians and Turks) to transcribe and translate the Indian and Buddhist scriptures.

For the same reason as well, Mani occupies a central place in Iranian culture and, more generally, in the history of writing. In casting his prophecy in a modern and clearly written language, he resolutely turned his back on the custodians of linguistic hieraticism who served the state religion (archaicizing language being the sign of outmoded religious practice) and prepared the way for the adoption of the Arab script in Iran following the advent of Islam. The prophecies of Mani and Muhammad each constituted a religion of the book. Such a religion, in order to give voice to God, must possess clarity of language and writing.

The Works of Mani

The works of Mani are nine in number: *Shabuhragan*, the *Gospel*, the *Treasure*, *Mysteries*, *Legends*, *Image*, *Giants*, *Letters*, and *Psalms and Prayers*.

◎ ◎ *Shabuhragan*

The earliest of Mani's works is a text composed directly in Pahlavi and dedicated to Shapur I. Substantial pieces of the original work have survived thanks to the manuscripts found at Turfan and have been rearranged (with the addition of a good number of new pieces), transliterated, translated, and annotated by D. N. MacKenzie ("Mani's Šābuhragā," I and II, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 42 [1979]: 500–534; 43 [1980]: 288–310).

In writing the *Shabuhragan* Mani's purpose was to formulate some of the fundamental intuitions of the new religion and to help his royal dedicatee understand its main aspects. These intuitions, or cosmic insights, belong to two domains that jointly define the plan of the work: prophetology and apocalypticism.

The prophetology, with which the book opens and of which al-Biruni preserved an essential fragment, affirmed the continuity of the proclamation of "wisdom and knowledge" from Adam to Mani. Coming at the end of this succession, Mani proclaimed himself "seal of the prophets," that is, the one who, in being historically and absolutely the last one, put an end to history and prepared the advent of a new aeon.

The theology of the "seal of the prophet" led directly to the description of a metahistory whose literary form was at this time apocalyptic. To construct the scenario of his eschatological hope, Mani once more drew abundantly, and especially, on New Testament writings (synoptic pericopes on the end of the world and judgment and Pauline accounts of the Parousia, that is, anticipation of the Second Coming of the Son of Man), as well as on a more specialized literature, chiefly the *Enoch* writings.

After a brief reminder of the two principles considered from a cosmological point of view (here one finds the fragment from 'Abd al-Jabbar [in *al-Mughni*] copied by al-Shahrastani [in *al-Milal*]), Mani comes right away to his apocalyptic purpose. The portents of the end of time are described

in the colors of a “great war,” an era of conflicts and upheavals in empires, religions, and the stars. These premonitory symptoms open the way to the messianic era marked by the Second Coming of the Son of Man, here called Xradeshahryazd (“God of the World of Wisdom”), namely, Jesus the Splendor, who attends to the judgment of the good (followers of the true religion) and the wicked (enemies of religion). To describe this judgment, Mani reproduces word for word the whole text from the Gospel according to Matthew relating to the last judgment (25:31–46). The separation of antinomic worlds that follows this judgment marks a return to beginnings, just as the entry into the last age of Xradeshahryazd, under the aegis of the prophet who had brought the chain of the prophets to its end, marked a return to the first prophecy sealed in the Adamic revelation and to a state of paradise. With this return commences the apocatastasis [MP *frashegird*] inaugurated by the appearance of Mihryazd, the Living Spirit, descending to earth from the chariot of the sun. Mihryazd then unleashes the great cataclysmic fire of the worlds and so causes the particles of light trapped on earth to be reassembled in heaven and the elect to reign in a renewed celestial realm, the new paradise [*wahisht i nog*].

The opening section of the *Shabuhragan* (prophetology) served as a theoretical framework for the author of *Keph.* 1, entitled “On the Coming of the Apostle”; the final section (apocalypticism) was commented on by Kustai in “The Sermon of the Great War” (*Hom.* 7.8–42.8).

◎ ◎ The Gospel

Placed at the head of the corpus by Mani’s immediate successors, the *Gospel* (whose complete title was *The Living Gospel*, and which Manichaean tradition nicknamed “The Great Living Gospel” and also “The Gospel of the Very Holy Hope”) was written by Mani in Syriac and divided by him into twenty-two sections, corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Aramaic alphabet, from *alef* to *taw* (the Coptic *Homilies* say from *alpha* to *omega*, using the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet).

Three fragments of this *Gospel* are conserved in the CMC. The first, a preamble, is found on page 66 (4–68, 5): “I, Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God the Father of Truth. . . .” In the second, on page 68 (6–69, 8), Mani declares that his mission consists in revealing to the world—that is, declaring before the false religions and pagan nations—the secrets

[*aporreta*] that were confided to him by means of revelations. In the third, these revelations are said to have taken place at the moment when Mani was still an adherent of the law, that is, a baptist, and received the visit of the angel, his “twin.”

According to the succinct but invaluable summary of the *Gospel* supplied by al-Biruni (who possessed a copy in his library) in *al-Athar*, Mani professed that he was “the paraclete heralded by Christ and the seal of the prophets.” It is highly probable that in this work the founder expanded upon the claims of the opening pages of the *Shabuhraḡan* through the systematic use of scriptural argument, that is, with the aid of an exegetical demonstration based on glossed citations drawn from the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John, and the Pauline Epistles. Just as the New Testament had reinterpreted the ancient prophecies of the Jewish Bible in terms of Jesus, so Mani in his *Gospel* reinterpreted the New Testament in terms of himself. It is therefore with good reason that the Coptic Psalm Book, in placing it at the head of the Manichaean canon, nicknamed this *Gospel* the “king” of Mani’s writings, his “New Testament,” since the founder developed in it the biblical and prophetological foundations of his ecclesiastical mission. In the first fragment he says:

Truth I showed to my traveling companions, peace I announced to the children of peace, hope I proclaimed to the immortal generation, election I elected, and the way that leads to the top I showed to those who go to the top, and this revelation I revealed, and this immortal gospel I put in writing in order to deposit in it these sublime mysteries [*orgia*] and to reveal in it three great works [*erga*].

This *Gospel* was the book that Manichaean missionaries carried with them on their travels. During Mani’s lifetime it had already been translated into all the languages spoken by the communities established by the founder—Greek, of course (the text of the fragments in the *CMC*), but also Middle Persian (M 17 and 733) and Parthian, from which the Sogdian version (M 172) derives. A good number of Turfan fragments relating to Manichaean prophetology and the exegesis of the New Testament parables ought, in my opinion, to be reattached to the *Gospel*, as has been done in the case of the *Synaxeis* (Dublin, Codex B).

◎ ◎ The *Treasure*

Composed in Syriac and known formally either as *The Treasure of the Living* [Syr *Simath hayye*] or *The Treasure of Life* [Copt *pthesauros mponh*], the “treasure” of the title is a word drawn from biblical wisdom vocabulary. The Arabs referred to this work as *The Treasure of the Vivification* [Kanz *al-ihya*]. Three fragments have come down to us indirectly through later authors. They are to be read in the following order:

Fragment *a*: al-Biruni, *Tahqiq*. The armies [*al-junud*—a Hebraicism designating the legions of angels] differ with regard not to beauty or sex (*a1*) but to the function assigned to them by the Third Messenger (Ambassador) (*a2*). The two parts of this fragment are linked by a brief scholium by al-Biruni.

Fragment *b*: Augustine, *De natura boni contra Manichaeos*, 44 (cited by Evodius, *De fide contra Manichaeos*, 14–16). The Third Messenger, who oversees the course of divine energies in the world from on high, is responsible for exploiting the “deadly unclean lust” congenital to hostile bodies in the heavens in order to cause them to release the living elements they contain. These elements then rise up and become reintegrated with the luminous powers, or particles of light, the unrecoverable residue falling back to earth and becoming mixed with the vegetable world.

Fragment *c*: Augustine, *Contra felicem Manichaeum*, II, 5 (cited by Evodius, *De fide contra Manichaeos*, 5). If the residual elements of the demons [*spiritus*] penetrate men, it is owing to the negligence of men. From this Augustine rightly drew the conclusion that Mani did not deny free will.

These three fragments, which form a unity, are part of a single passage, no doubt in Book VII, which Augustine explicitly mentions in introducing fragment *b*. The expression “in book II of the *Treasure*,” which introduces the quotation from fragment *c* in Evodius alone, refers to the

place of the work in the Manichaean canon and must not be understood as referring to an internal division of the work itself.

Three accounts of the *Treasure* [Lat *Thesaurus*] are known; that is, three sources refer to parts of this work. In it, according to the Coptic *Kephalaia* (91, p. 230), Mani speaks of the "good pearl." Al-Mas'udi indicates in *al-Tanbih wa-l-ishraf* that Mani discusses the Marcionites. The *Ta'riq* of al-Ya'qubi records that, in seeking to explain the origin of moral evil, Mani represents it as the consequence of conflicts inherent in the world of celestial powers, conflicts not totally eliminated by the intervention of the messenger heralded by Elijah.

This much suggests that the *Treasure* was the first systematic exposition of Manichaean theology, composed as a defensive apology. Supplementing the conception of the church as the spiritual body of the prophet, developed in the *Gospel*, is the view of it in the *Treasure* as consubstantial with the angelic church.

◉ ◉ The *Mysteries*

The plan of the *Mysteries* [Syr *raze*], also known as *The Book of Mysteries* [Gr *Ta tōn mustērion*, Copt *Pjōme nmmusterion*, Ar *Sifr al-asrar*], is known from a note by Ibn al-Nadim in *al-Fihrist* that provides the names of the eighteen sections or chapters [*abwab*] of the work:

1. "An Account of the Daysanites": This is an attack on the theories of Bardesanes (Bardaisan), poet and "philosopher of the Aramaeans," who died in 222 and whose disciples were settled not only in the Christian communities of Osrhoene and Tur 'Abdin but also in Babylonia. Ephraem Syrus indicates that Bardesanes had also composed a book of mysteries. This would explain the title chosen by Mani, having wished in this way to oppose to Bardesanes' *De mysteriis* his own *De mysteriis*.

2. "Testimony of Hystaspes Regarding the Beloved": It may be supposed that in this chapter Mani gave an account drawn from a text of revelation ascribed to Hystaspes (Ar *Ystasf*, also *Vishtaspa*), the mythical king converted by Zoroaster, and applied it to one of the figures in his own pantheon, probably Jesus.

3. "Account [. . .] Regarding His Soul [= about Mani himself] as Given to Jacob": The text prefaced by this title is not established. The exegetical method used seems to have been the same as in the preceding chapter,

incorporating a piece of pseudepigraphal speculation (the Prayer of Joseph) related to the angel Jacob in support of an aspect of Mani's own mythology.

4. "The Son of the Widow": The title calls to mind the son of the widow of Zarephath brought back to life by the prophet Elijah (see 1 Kings 17:8–24 and Luke 4:25–26). But the gloss of Ibn al-Nadim is categorical: "For Mani it was the crucified Messiah whom the Jews crucified." The title is therefore to be taken analogically: Jesus, son of Mary, widow of Joseph.

5. "Account of Jesus Regarding His Soul [= about himself] as Given to Judas": In view of the preamble to the *Gospel of Thomas* ("These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down"), it might be supposed that Mani's purpose in this section was to comment on the words [*logia*] of Jesus transmitted as part of a tradition ascribed to Judas Thomas and adopted by the *Gospel of Thomas*.

6. "Beginning of the Testimony of the Just [Man] after His Triumph": This is perhaps an exegesis of a fragment of the *Apocalypse of Enoch*. Enoch was known as the Just [*al-Yamin*].

7. "The Seven Spirits": The word "spirits" [*arwah*] is to be understood in its demonological sense as meaning a personification of the powers of darkness associated with the seven stars of destiny, reinterpreted in the Manichaean version given here.

8. "Discourse [*al-qaul*] Regarding the Four Transient Spirits": The demonological personification is concerned here not with the days of the week but with the months of the year, grouped in tetrads.

9. "Mockery" [*al-duhka*]—not, I think, "Laughter" [*al-dahka*]: This is perhaps an allusion to the mockeries directed against Mani by the upholders of the false religions, recalling Jesus, who was the laughingstock of his coreligionists.

10. "Testimony of Adam Regarding Jesus": It seems probable that here Mani was interpreting prophetological extracts drawn from an apocalypse of Adam (no doubt the one cited by the CMC, not the Coptic one found in the Nag Hammadi manuscripts) in order to establish the chain of prophets from Adam to Jesus.

11. "Forfeit of [= Fall from] Religion": This section might have concerned not religious apostasy but certain points of moral practice whose

nonobservance has the effect of leading the faithful astray from the true religion.

12. "Doctrine of the Daysanites [= Bardesanites] Regarding the Soul and the Body": The Bardesian theory, derived from Greek (in particular Platonist) philosophical ideas, was extended here in the direction of a radical antiphysicalism (see the following, xiii[a]).

13. "Refutation of the Bardesanites Concerning the Living Soul": This is a continuation of the preceding section, containing the following three fragments (mentioned by al-Biruni in the *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind*) in connection with the highest part of the soul, called the "living self" or "soul of life" [*nafs al-hayah*]:

(a) Since the body is a prison and a punishment, the soul is able truly to live only outside the body (p. 212, 15–18 Afshar).

(b) Mani quotes a logion of Jesus on the punishment of souls who have not attained rest, that is, have not found the truth at the end of their transmigrations (p. 212, 11–14 Afshar; al-Biruni expressly declares that the fragment comes from *Sifr al-asrar* and cautions that in Mani's use of the term, "to perish" means not "to disappear" but "to be punished").

(c) Mani cites another logion of Jesus on the immortality of the soul that has found life (not found in Afshar).

14. "The Three Trenches": This section is concerned to develop a point of cosmology. The trenches [Ar *khanadiq*, Gr *phossata*] designate a series of pits (varying between three and seven in number) dug around the world into which the demonic waste of the firmaments is poured (see *Keph.* 43, 45).

15. "The Preservation of the Cosmos": This section deals with the demiurgical work of the Living Spirit and the supporting activity of the Third Messenger, particularly in establishing the two lights (the sun and the moon) and cosmic ligaments. I would locate in this section the logion of Mani cited in al-Biruni's *Tahqiq* (19–21 Afshar) concerning the role of the sun and moon as "paths" or "gates" of souls.

16. "The Three Days": The theme of the three days [*ayyam*] of theogony was adopted and developed by the tradition of the *Kephalaia* (39): "On the Three Days and the Two Deaths."

17. "The Prophets": Here Mani clarified certain points of his propheto-

logical doctrine, distinguishing the “false prophets” of the world’s religions (in particular the historical prophets of Judaism) from the true prophets or envoys of God (Adam, Seth, and Jesus). Al-Ya’qubi refers to this section of the *Mysteries*, declaring that Mani in the *Sifr al-asrar* mocked the miracles of the prophets. A fragment against the astrologists, probably taken from this section, is quoted in al-Biruni’s *Tahqiq* (214, 23–25, 2 Afshar).

18. “The Final Judgment”: The last section of the work is dedicated to eschatology and completing the exposition of the *Shabuhragan*. The Arabic chapter heading [*al-qiyama*] cannot be interpreted as signifying “resurrection.”

The *Mysteries* is therefore, like the *Treasure*, a work of justification. In it one finds brief accounts of certain points of thought and religion alongside attacks upon Bardesanites, Jews, and “false religions,” all of them motivated by circumstance and the need to prepare disciples to preach under adverse conditions. The book’s originality consists in its extensive use of apocryphal traditions (Christian and other) whose maxims and accounts were applied by Mani to Jesus. This fact, as well as the important place reserved for anti-Bardesanite controversies, shows that the work was composed while Mani was in contact with the Christian communities of Syria and Mesopotamia, mainly during the final phase of his missionary activity (260–70).

In his list of Mani’s letters and those of his successors, Ibn al-Nadim indicates that the *Mysteries* was the object of a commentary in the form of an epistle [*risala*] by a certain ‘Abdiel, who may well have been the Timotheos cited several times in the *CMC*.

◉ ◉ *Legends*

Mani composed in Syriac a cycle of legends whose Greek title, *Pragmateia*, was brought over into Aramaic and reproduced in the Arabic and Chinese translations of the work.

What does the Greek title mean? In this case the term does not have the philosophical sense of “treatise.” Indeed, to translate it in this way would be not only awkward (in view of the risk of confusion with the Chinese Manichaean exposition published and translated by Chavannes

and Pelliot in 1911–13 and commonly called the *Traité*, its original title having been lost) but also mistaken. For while it is quite true, in the vocabulary of Greek rhetoric and epistemology from the time of Aristotle, that “*pragmateia*” had the technical sense of “treatise” (Sextus Empiricus used it to speak of a work on music or physics), with Mani the term re-acquired the popular and scholarly sense given it earlier in the headings of Homeric epics or in the plots of dramas and romances. Thus it is that in the Greek of the preclassical period, the (grammatically singular) expression *troikè pragmateia* signifies not a “treatise” relating to the Trojan War but legendary accounts—or, more simply, legends—of the Trojan War. These legends [*pragmateia*] were therefore synonymous with myths [*muthoi*] or mythological inventions [*muthologika*].

The text of this work was widely read and plundered by non-Manichaeans, for the picturesque aspect of its accounts of the birth of the gods and of men furnished heresiologists with a great many piquant and comical details, well suited to confound and ridicule the disciples of a teller of such tales. One of the authors who applied himself to this task was an eighth-century Nestorian doctor from Kaskar, in southern Babylonia, named Theodore bar Konai. His method in presenting Mani’s doctrine was to collect various “tall tales” told by a man whom he called the “villain.” An attentive reading of the eleventh book of Theodore’s *Liber scholiorum* shows that it is not a simple summary but instead a series of quotations taken from Mani’s book. Despite the apparently disjointed and incoherent character of these quotations, each introduced by the formula “he says,” they form a complete, unified narrative that begins with the birth of the gods outside the world of light and continues up to Adam’s rescue by “brilliant Jesus.” What one is dealing with here, then, is a cycle of legends concerning the origin of things and of creatures from which all eschatological perspective has deliberately been excluded. For, apart from the fact that Mani had treated this perspective elsewhere, in the *Shabuhraḡan* and the *Gospel*, he did not regard eschatology as belonging to the domain of *muthos*, which is subject to borrowing and variation among different cultures; it constituted instead the very object of the *logos* of revelation transmitted by the prophet to his church. Accordingly there is no alternative but to conclude that the

doctrinal part of Theodore's exposition transmits the key passages of the *Pragmateia* in their original language.

Mani composed this collection of legends to respond to the curiosity of his followers, who were eager to know "how things had happened in the earliest times of the world." As the founder of a religion, Mani had to take into account the mentality of people who, having been nourished by imaginary tales from childhood, were perpetually starving for new mythologies. In order for his religion to win popular support, he needed to create an imaginary world that would be rich in incident and adventure, yet at the same time controlled and coherent. It was this poetical purpose to which he devoted himself in the *Pragmateia*, without suspecting that it was to become the essential part of his teaching for many of his followers and a hobbyhorse for all future adversaries of his church.

◎ ◎ *Image*

In *Bayan al-adyan*, the first Persian book of heresiology, composed in A.D. 485 (H 1092), Abu l-Ma'ali-ye 'Alavi wrote (in Massé's translation), "Mani was a past master of pictorial art. It is said that, on a piece of white silk, he traced a line in such a way that on removing a single silk thread, the line could no longer be seen; he composed a book with various images, a book called *Arzhang Mani* that is in the treasures of Ghaznin."

This book of images was called *Ardahang* in Middle Persian and Parthian. In the Chinese *Compendium*, it is placed at the end of the Manichaean canon under the title of *Ta-men-ho-i* (the Great Men-ho-i) and described as "the drawing of the two great principles." It was, therefore, an album of plates painted by Mani to illustrate his theogony and his cosmogony. The Coptic *Homilies* (p. 25, 5) mention it in an appendix to the Manichaean Heptateuch under the Greek title *Eikōn*, but the title is sometimes met with in the plural, *Eikones* (Images), as well. Another passage in the *Homilies* (p. 18, 5-6), describing the tribulations of a Manichaean church beset by persecutions and autos-da-fé, puts these words in Mani's mouth: "I weep over the paintings of my *Image* while I commemorate their beauty."

H. J. Polotsky suggested that this album of images (also known as the *Picture Book*) was meant to illustrate the *Gospel*. The known fragments

of this latter work concern prophetology, however, and the work as a whole seems to be a sort of *praeparatio evangelica* of Manichaeism based on exegeses of texts taken from the apocalypses and Gospels. The purpose would have readily been understood, and in order to communicate its message Mani would have had no need to rewrite it using lines and colors. A more probable hypothesis, confirmed by the Stein fragment, is that Mani thought to explain the much more complicated contents of his collection *Legends* by means of iconography (the word appears in the *Kephalaia*). This collection presented readers (or listeners) with a skein of situations, characters, and cosmic places so tangled that the thread of the account was liable to be lost at any moment. In response to the needs of the catechism, and perhaps also to a request made by one of his disciples, Mani resolved to use his brush to fix in the minds of the faithful a few key scenes that his imagination as a poet and visionary had created in the *Pragmateia*: the antinomic worlds of light and darkness and the struggle of the two principles; the defeat, then the rescue, and finally the victory of Ohrmizd; the call of the Living Spirit; the creation of the visible universe by the demiurge; and the dispatch of the Third Messenger. Each picture was accompanied by a legend in the strict sense, that is, an explanatory note or caption making it possible to “read” the picture. Taken together, these explanations amounted to a sustained guide or commentary upon the volume—the *Ardahang wifras*, of which we possess a few fragments in Parthian and Middle Persian.

The success of this collection of illustrations was immense, and not only among Manichaeans. As Abu l-Ma’ali-ye ‘Alavi testified in the eleventh century, and along with him many Persian poets and men of letters who came after, Islamic Iran was unstinting in its admiration for the author of *Image*. Opposed as a prophet (or rather, supplanted in this function by another prophet from Arabia), but still revered as a painter and artist, Mani has occupied an exalted and contested place in the collective memory of his compatriots from the Hegira until the present day.

◉ ◉ *Giants*

Mani composed, in addition to the collection of legends (*Pragmateia*), another cycle of fabulous narratives, this one entitled *Kawan* in Middle

Persian and Parthian. The Coptic texts call it *Tgraphe mngigas*, *Pjome mngigas*, or else *Pjome nncalashire: Book of Giants*. This is the title that it bears in Arabic as well: *Sifr al-jababira*. In the preamble to the *Kephalaia*, the compiler has Mani enumerate the books of the canon of the Manichaean church, established after his death. There Mani includes *Giants*, describing it as “the book I wrote at the request of the Parthians.” It may well have been at the request [Copt *laice* = Gr *aitema*] of the Parthians—actually, that is, of Mar Ammo—that Mani undertook to recount an episode of the history of origins only mentioned in the *Pragmateia*. He wrote this story in Syriac, and we can be sure that his missionaries carried it not only into Parthia but beyond, since the fragments of it that have survived and that W. B. Henning reassembled come from all the languages spoken in Central Asia.

The central theme of the book was not new in the literature of the period, for popular memory was filled with stories of giants. In the Judeo-Aramaean literary domain, to which Mani belonged by virtue of the religious training he received as a child, giants [*nephilim*] figured in the biblical account of the causes of the Flood (Genesis 6:1–2, 4):

When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose. . . . The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

The story told in these three verses was borrowed and amplified in a Jewish apocalypse written in Hebrew in about A.D. 150, the *Apocalypse of Enoch*, a vade mecum of eschatological beliefs current at the dawn of the Christian era. Its success among adherents of the various forms of Christianity and Judeo-Christianity was extraordinary. In addition to a complete version found in Ethiopic (known as *1 Enoch*), long fragments survive in Greek papyri, and a readaptation for the use of Slavic Christians (*2 Enoch*) exists as well. Aramaic fragments, found in the caves of Qumran, also testify to the influence of this work in marginal Jewish movements. J. T. Milik has noticed, among other things, that some of these fragments come from a different version of the “Book of the

Watchers,” which constitutes the first part of 1 *Enoch*. Now these fragments could not have been quotations from the “Book of the Watchers”; they belong instead to an independent account that relates, with a great many details and proper names, the amorous and dramatic adventures of the fallen angels and their terrestrial progeny, the giants [*gibborim*]. Thanks to the Manichaean fragments reassembled by Henning, Milik was able to identify the fragments of the Qumran caves as the remnants of a Jewish Second Temple-era *Book of Giants*. Thus Mani, who was familiar with apocalyptic literature from his early Elchasaitic education, in particular the *Apocalypse of Enoch* and the *Book of Giants*, drew from this latter work the material for his own book. His missionaries popularized it not only in the northeastern lands of the Iranian Empire but also in the Greco-Latin world. Indeed, the Manichaean *Book of Giants* ultimately reached the two extremities of the known world: in the West, the Gelasian Decree, which condemned it at the beginning of the sixth century along with the other apocalyptic writings, mentioned it under the title *Liber de Ogia*, from the name of one of the giants named in the book; in the East, the eighth-century Chinese *Compendium* referred to it by the title that it bears in Parthian and Middle Persian, *Chu-huan* [“Book of Strong Heroes” = *Kawan*].

From the Jewish *Book of Giants*, with its visions, dreams, and celestial voyages, Mani created a new version while leaving the situations and characters unchanged. In both tellings Shemihaza gives birth to two sons, Ohya (= Ogias) and Ahya (Pat-Sahm in the Sogdian transmission). The first of these two brothers fought the dragon Leviathan; the second attacked Mahawai, son of Virogdad. In the Pahlavi and Sogdian adaptations known through the Turfan fragments, the two sons of Shemihaza/Shahmizad assume the names of Sam and Nariman, more familiar to Iranian readers than the Aramaic names of the Jewish source text. The exploits and combats of these giants, against the monsters and among themselves, are followed by a fantastic gigantomachy that ends, as in the *Apocalypse of Enoch*, with the victory of a tetrad of angels (Raphael, Michael, Gabriel, Istraël) over the combined forces of demonic anarchy.

These colorful stories constitute an essential part of the Semitic heritage in the Manichaean imagination. Mani’s successors at the head of the

church, like him Aramaeans, retained the *Book of Giants* in the canon of scriptures while excluding from it the *Shabuhragan*, which no longer served any purpose since the kings of Iran had now become the active enemies of the church. One might even consider the *Book of Giants* to be a sort of anti-*Shabuhragan*. It is not impossible, in fact, that at the end of his life, writing a stronger version of the Jewish book “for the Parthians,” Mani (like his readers), confronted with the hatred of the powers of this world, had seen and read in the violence and corruption of the original giants the fate of failure and death befalling historical empires and their princes—and this all the more readily as the Middle Persian word for “giants” [*kawan*] was, during the Sassanid period, synonymous with “tyrants.” The Manichaean *Book of Giants* was therefore conceived and perceived as a political pamphlet in the guise of allegory and myth. This would explain its retention in the canon and, as a further consequence, the elimination of the *Shabuhragan*.

◎ ◎ Letters

Mani, like Paul at the dawn of the Christian era, wrote a great many letters. Indeed, he was the most prolific letter writer of the Sassanid period. Some of these letters were no more than brief notes meant to salute the founding of a new community, announce a visit by the founder, accompany the dispatch of one of his writings, or settle a particular matter; others had the character of doctrinal epistles, addressed generally to the heads of missions and intended to fortify their faith by emphasizing certain fundamental aspects of the thought, history, and liturgy of the church; still others, finally, were disciplinary messages, or monitions, concerning the internal organization of the communities of the church and their supervision. Incessantly copied, translated, and recopied during the lifetime of their author, these writings were diligently collected by his successors into a great corpus that included, along with letters written by the founder, ones composed by dignitaries close to him and, by virtue of this fact, held to be of equal value.

This collection, originally part of the Manichaean library found in Egypt, is now lost. Only a few pages have survived (Berlin P 15998 and Warsaw). Ibn al-Nadim, in the *Fihrist*, conserved superscriptions con-

taining the names and addresses of the recipients of seventy-six letters [*rasa'il*]; he knew, and recopied, only those ecclesiastical titles created by Manichaean tradition while the corpus was being constituted. The nomenclature was subjected by translators and copyists to a great many alterations in the course of transmission, particularly with regard to proper names. Nonetheless, it gives us some idea of the remarkable variety of this correspondence, in which the practical problems facing the young Manichaean church were predominant.

◎ ◎ *Psalms and Prayers*

The Manichaean Psalm Book found in Coptic says that Mani composed “two Psalms” and “Prayers.” The Manichaean compilers of the great liturgical edition of the Coptic Psalter did not include these two psalms and prayers in their work, however. It is therefore practically impossible to determine with certainty whether some of the Turfan fragments come from these two psalms and prayers composed by Mani. The ascription to Mani of this or that piece is a theological claim, not a label of authenticity.

Probably after the example of Bardesanes, and a century before Ephraem began to imitate the lyricism of the “philosopher of the Aramaeans,” Mani used Syriac metrical forms to compose the two psalms and the prayers. The beauty and the rhythm of these verses resisted all translation. As a true poet, Mani would naturally have sought instead to encourage his disciples to create new psalms and prayers in their own native languages; and in fact such compositions constitute by far the greatest part of the Manichaean hymnic literature that has come down to us through papyrological and archaeological discoveries.

The Canon of Scriptures

The fixing of a canon of scriptures—that is, the application of a rule determining whether a particular text is to be admitted into a closed collection of sacred works—is a disciplinary decision that falls within the competence of the supreme authority of a religion at a given moment of its history and that over time comes to be granted inviolable authority in the name of tradition. In the case of Manichaeism this decision seems to have been taken following Mani’s death under the pontificate of Sis,

in keeping with the founder's wishes, and until quite late in its history it was regarded as sacrosanct.

Three things argue in favor of this conclusion. First, the Coptic sources uniformly attest that the canon was fixed as a heptateuch, consisting of the written works left by Mani (in contradistinction to Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus, who left only oral traditions), during the same period that witnessed the redaction of the first great doctrinal commentaries of the new church and the constitution of the liturgical psalm book. Second, these same sources attribute the order of the canon to Mani on three occasions (preamble to the *Kephalaia*, *Keph.* 148, and p. 94 of the *Homilies*: "I wrote to you . . .," "I gave to you . . .") Finally, the presence of the same canon in the *Compendium* indicates that the decision of the founding Babylonian church continued to be respected by Chinese Manichaeans under the T'ang Dynasty.

The comparative nomenclature of the canon in the Manichaean sources reveals, in addition to the exclusion of the *Shabuhragan*, that the canon was constituted as a heptateuch. Further, the list in the *Compendium* follows exactly the one given in the final section of the Coptic *Homilies* (p. 94). Notwithstanding a difference in the ordering of *Mysteries*, *Legends*, and *Giants* in these two lists, they are grouped together in both: *Keph.* 148 expressly declares that "these three writings form only a single one." By placing the three books concerned with the exposition of mythology together in this way, the Manichaean sources themselves show that the primitive and authentic heptateuch can *also* be considered as a pentateuch. This view is confirmed by the testimony of the Manichaean Felix, who during his debate with Augustine in December 404 referred to the five *auctores* (*Contra felicem*, I, 14)—that is, to the totality of Mani's works, classified as a pentateuch for reasons of theological concordance, as the very title of *Keph.* 148 makes clear: "On the Five Books insofar as They Belong to the Five Fathers."

By contrast, the tetrateuch represented by Christian heresiologists, Syriac, Greek, and Latin alike, as forming the Manichaean canon has no foundation in the Manichaean sources. This erroneous interpretation goes back to the *Acta Archelai* (Acts of Archelaus) and improperly combines three works by Mani with the great doctrinal commentary of the later Manichaean tradition, the *Kephalaia*.

The False Tetrateuch

Latin Hegemonius <i>Acta Archelai</i> (62.3)	Greek Epiphanius <i>Panarion</i> (66.2.9)	Syriac Theodore bar Konai <i>Scholia</i> (312.6–8)
1. Mysteria	Musteria	Raze
2. Capitula	Kephalaia	Rishe
3. Euangelium	Euangelion	Ewangeliyun
4. Thesaurus	Thesauros	Simatha

The Manichaeen Patrology

The Manichaeans divided their holy books into three categories: the heptateuch of Mani; *Image*; and works sanctioned by tradition. The “Sermon of the Great War” by Kustai and the Chinese *Compendium* place *Image* as an appendix to the heptateuch. After *Image* come all the written productions of the ancient Manichaeen tradition. The *Compendium* calls them the “Teachings” of Mani; the Coptic Psalm Book (p. 47), his “words”; and the *Homilies* (p. 25), “his revelations, his parables, and his mysteries.” These latter works, recording and commenting on the sayings of Mani as interpreted in the tradition of his church, and elaborating its ritual, together form what is legitimately called the Manichaeen patrology. They may be divided in turn into four groups: hagiographic accounts, doctrinal commentaries, sacred songs, and practical guides.

⊙ ⊙ 1. Hagiographic Accounts

These concern the life of Mani but are neither “lives” nor “autobiographies” in the modern sense of these words. They are catechisms intended to evoke decisive moments in Mani’s prophetic mission.

(A) COLOGNE MANI CODEX (CMC) Parchment manuscript volume in miniature format (4.5 x 3.5 cm) consisting of 192 pages divided into 23 lines per page (written surface: 3.5 x 2.5 cm), conserved at the University of Cologne (P. Colon. 4780 = 1012 Van Haelst). Written in Greek and originating in Upper Egypt (Lycopolis/Asyut), it is commonly known by its title, “On the Birth of His Body.” The paleographic dating of this codex is a matter of dispute (fourth–fifth century, sixth century, perhaps even eighth century, though this last date is unlikely). It contains a

Figure 3. From Heptateuch to Pentateuch

<i>Heptateuch</i>	<i>Keph. 148; Hom. 25</i>	<i>Ps. 46–47; 139–40</i>	<i>Keph. 5</i>	<i>Hom. 94</i>	<i>Chinese Compendium</i>	<i>Pentateuch</i>
1. Gospel	Euaggelion	Euaggelion	Euaggelion	Euaggelion	Ying-loun < Gr : euaggelion	Gospel 1.
2. Treasure	Thēsauros	Thēsauros	Thēsauros	Thēsauros	Hsin-t'i < Aram : SMTh	Treasure 2.
3. Legends	Pragmateia	Pragmateia	Pragmateia	[Epistolaue]	Ni-wan < MP : diwan	Letters 3.
4. Mysteries	mMustērion	mMustērion	pTa tōn mustērion	mMustērion	A-lo-tsan < MP : razan	Mysteries
5. Giants	nGigas	nCalashire	graphē ntlaice nnParthos	Pragmateia	Po-tchia-ma-ti-yeh < Gr : Pragmateia	Legends 4.
6. Letters	Epistolaue	Epistolaue	Epistolaue	graphe [ntlaice nnParthos]	Tchü-houan < MP : kawan	Giants
7. Prayers + Psalms	mPsalmos + nShlel	nShlel + 2 Psalmos	mPsalmos + nShlel	nShlel	A-fu-yin < MP : afrin	Prayers 5.

moralizing reconstruction of the conflicts of Mani's youth based on the founder's own accounts as interpreted by his disciples (Baraies, Abiesus, Innaios, Timotheos, and Zacheas [MP: Zaku]). This document is fundamental for understanding Mani's spiritual development up until his decision to break with Elchasaism and found a new religion.

(B) *THE COPTIC HOMILIES* Papyrus manuscript volume containing 48 leaves (= 96 pages), coming from the Faiyum in Egypt and conserved today at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (Codex D). It contains four *logoi*, or meditative homilies for the catechism, composed by Mani's immediate disciples. The first homily (1.1–7.7) is a lament by Salmaios, in the form of a prayer, on the death of Mani. The second (7.8–42.8), attributed to Kustai and entitled "Sermon of the Great War," is a meditation on the apocalyptic section of the *Shabuhrgan*. The third (42.9–85.34) is the catechistic evocation of the "crucifixion," that is, the imprisonment and death of Mani, and of the first persecutions undergone by the community in Iran under Bahram I. The fourth (86.1–96.27) is a eulogy for Mani risen to heaven. These four pieces are to Mani's last years what the CMC is to his early years. Their tragic beauty stands out in sharp contrast to the moralizing and apologetic quality of the CMC. For the faithful these two collections were a source of hope. The Berlin counterpart to these Homilies (P 15999) is lost.

(C) *THE ACTS* A complement to the CMC and the *Homilies* for the history of the Manichaean church, this codex of Acts [*Praxeis*], written in Coptic, survives only through fragments of pages conserved in Berlin (P 15997) and a page in Dublin (facsimile in *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library*, vol. 2 [Geneva, 1986], pls. 99–100).

◉ ◉ 2. Doctrinal Commentaries

(A) *THE COPTIC KEPHALAIA* This great doctrinal commentary on the logia of Mani forms a volume of more than eight hundred pages in the Coptic translation found in the Faiyum, the first part of which is conserved in Berlin (P 15996) and the second, in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (Codex C; facsimiles: *Manichaean Coptic Papyri*, vol. 1 [Geneva, 1986]). The general Greek title given to the collection by its

Manichaean compilers, *Kephalaia*, suggests that it constituted a veritable *summa theologica* of Manichaeism, assembled at a moment when the new religion was obliged, in the face of the first controversies unleashed by rival (Zoroastrian and Christian) ecclesiastical authorities, to structure, clarify, and develop in its smallest details the thought of the master. The authors of the compilation sought above all to respond to the attacks that had been brought against the *Pragmateia*. Their argument consisted in showing that each situation, each term, and each figure in Mani's cosmo-theogonic exposition has several facets, and therefore multiple interpretations, and that these interpretations combine to form a complex whole, so that the effect of exegesis is to remove the possibility of reading Mani's mythological exposition in linear terms as a historical account and therefore to structure doctrine instead as an allegorizing science in the service of ecclesiology.

(B) THE SYNAXEIS Another Coptic collection of exegeses of the logia of Mani and of quotations from his works, commented on for liturgical purposes, this codex is conserved only in fragmentary form, in Dublin (Codex B; facsimiles in *Manichaean Coptic Papyri*, vol. 2, pl. 101–26) and in Berlin (P 15995).

(C) THE CHINESE TRAITÉ The great scroll found in the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-huang, and conserved today in Beijing, dates roughly from the middle of the tenth century. The beginning of the manuscript has disappeared, and with it the original title. The two French scholars who published and translated the surviving text, Chavannes and Pelliot, gave their monograph the title “Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine” (A Manichaean treatise found in China), and it has been customary to refer to it by this title since. Cast in a literary framework borrowed from the *sutra*, the *Traité* appears to have been an exegesis of a cosmo-theogonic exposition drawn from Iranian sources, assimilating the panallegorism of the method of the *Kephalaia* and adapted to a Buddhist cultural milieu.

◎ ◎ 3. Sacred Songs

(A) THE COPTIC PSALM BOOKS The manuscript of the antiphonary of the Manichaean church of Egypt fills a large papyrus volume of

medium-size format (27 x 17.5 cm) originating in the Faiyum and today conserved at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (Codex A). Only the second part of the codex has been published, by C. R. C. Allberry (*A Manichaean Psalm-Book* [Stuttgart, 1938]); the first part is available in facsimile form (*Manichaean Coptic Papyri*, vol. 3 [Geneva, 1988]; facsimiles of the second part may be found in vol. 4 of the same work, also published in 1988). At the end of the second part the copyist indexed all the numbered pieces of the volume, grouping them according to their liturgical use or their supposed author: psalms for the synaxis (assembly of monks), for Sunday service, for Easter, psalms by Heracleides, psalms for vigils, for the Bema festival, psalms to Jesus (this subtitle, which is not in the manuscript, was inserted by a modern editor), and Heraclidean psalms again. There are also a great many pieces whose use is not specified, placed under the head "Various." Following the numbered collection are unnumbered groups of hymns that undoubtedly were not used in the liturgy: Various, Psalms of the Wanderers, of Heracleides, and of Thomas (these last, according to Polotsky, were Mandaean hymns that had been incorporated into the Psalm Book). Taken together, these pieces constitute a monument of the highest importance for appreciating liturgical prayer as it was actually practiced by a Manichaean community during the middle of the fourth century.

Additional evidence of great value regarding liturgical prayer among Coptic Manichaeans is furnished by the wooden codices found during archaeological excavations of the site of Kellis (Ismant el-Kharab), 365 kilometers west of Luxor in the Dakhlah oasis (I. Gardner, "A Manichaean Liturgical Codex Found at Kellis," *Orientalia* 62 [1993]: 30–59).

(B) THE IRANIAN HYMNALS Like the Manichaean community in Egypt, Iranian-speaking Manichaeans possessed their own antiphonary, similarly equipped with an index and found piece by piece at Turfan. The Pahlavi hymnal is represented by two texts: the "Hymn to the Living Self (Soul)" [*Govishn ig griv zindag*] and the "Hymn of the Luminous Self (Soul)" [*Govishn ig griv roshn*]; no new reconstitution of either one has been proposed since the work of Henning. The Parthian hymnal is known through two long texts—"Our Chance" [*Huyadag-man*] and "Armed with Wisdom" [*Angad roshnan*], which take their

names from the first words of the first song in each—attributed to Mar Ammo, whose fragments have been ably reconstituted by Mary Boyce (*The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian* [Oxford, 1954]; facsimiles of the Parthian and Sogdian fragments may be found in Werner Sundermann, *The Manichaean Hymn Cycles Huyadagmān and Angad Rōšnān in Parthian and Sogdian* [London, 1990]). With these two Parthian hymnals may also be associated the rhythmic prose of the great Parthian hymns [*Wazargan afriwan*], a few remnants of which also exist in Sogdian. Like those of the Coptic Psalm Book, all these hymns are quite remarkable for the religious sensibility they manifest, their poetic qualities, and the central place accorded to Jesus in prayer.

(C) THE CHINESE HYMNAL (HYMN SCROLL) Twenty-five hymns are preserved in the scroll discovered at Tun-huang, presently conserved in London (Br. L. Or. Stein 2659). As shown by Hymn XIII, which is a complete Chinese version of the first song of the *Huyadagman* (identification due to Henning, 1943), the Chinese hymnal is an adaptation of the Parthian Manichaean poetry to a Buddhist cultural milieu and presents, with respect to its contents, the same characteristics as Parthian and Coptic hymnology.

◎ ◎ 4. The Practical Guides

Although late, the two following pieces deserve to be mentioned by virtue of the originality of their form and content.

(A) THE UIGHUR *XVASTVANEFT* In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Manichaean church of Turkestan made use of formularies for the confession of sins by monks (the elect) and by lay worshipers (hearers). Formularies for the elect survive in fragmentary form in Sogdian (particularly M 801); only one is attested in Late Pahlavi (M 201). By contrast, we possess the complete text of a prayer-confessional for hearers, the *Xvastvaneft*, also originating in the region of Turfan and translated into Old Turkish (Br. L. Or. 8212) on the basis of a Sogdian original and published successively by A. von Le Coq, W. Bang, and J. P. Asmussen. Such formularies consisted not of lists of culpable sins but, in the fashion of medieval Christian apologies, of a confession of faith proclaiming fundamental points of belief. These statements automatically marked off

the boundaries of unacceptable conduct, that is, behavior in contradiction to the confessed dogma. In the Uighur *Xvastvaneft*, for example, each doctrinal assertion is accompanied by a request to be pardoned. This formulary formed part of the festive liturgy of the Bema and was recited by an officiating priest in the name of the faithful.

(B) THE CHINESE COMPENDIUM The first part (= the first four articles) of a scroll dating from 731 and found at Tun-huang, entitled *Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light*, is conserved in London (Br. L. Or. Stein 3969); the second part (articles 5 and 6) is conserved in Paris (B. N. Or. Pelliot chinois 3884). The end of the text, that is, the end of article 6 and the following articles, has not been found. This unique text in the documentation of the Manichaean corpus, translated from the Parthian into Chinese by a Manichaean bishop familiar with Buddhist terminology, is a condensed version ("a sort of catechism," in Pelliot's words) of all Manichaeism, intended in its Chinese version for the religious authorities of the imperial T'ang government.

The six articles of the Stein and Pelliot fragments, stating the doctrines and rules of the religion, are composed of the following sections: (1) His Descent into a Body and His Homeland, His Names and Titles, His Own Doctrines [= Manichaean dates and personality of the founder]; (2) Rules Concerning His Corporeal Representations [= rules for representing Mani as a Buddha of Light]; (3) Rules Concerning the Canon of the Scriptures and *Image* [= the heptateuch, *Image*, works sanctioned by tradition]; (4) Rules Concerning the Five Orders [= hierarchy and duties inherent in each order]; (5) Rules Concerning the Buildings of the Monastery [= enumeration of rooms, way of life of the elect]; (6) Rules for Entering the Religion [= rules for becoming a Manichaean: accepting the doctrines of the Two Principles and the Three Times].

The Community

Jesus left it to his successors to write gospels and to found a church—a decision that gave rise to disagreements, quarrels, and schisms. To preserve the unity of his disciples, Mani resolved to compose his gospel himself and personally to organize his religion into a church. Announcing to his contemporaries that hope and justice had come in him and through him, as the seal of prophecy, Mani took the same care in organizing the growing community of those who responded to his call that he took in writing his books and painting his images. Each member of the flock was assigned a place and function. The continuity of testimony regarding the strictly ecclesiastical structure given to this community, from its origins until the Middle Ages, shows that it would be a mistake to oppose Mani's prophetic charisma to the (late or secondary) institutional character of his church. Mani was at once prophet and lawgiver, an energetic apostle and an organizer of people. He was, say the texts, the head of a church whose members were all his brothers. He described "the birth of his body"—that is, the his church, located in the midst of the (false) religions of the earth—with the same meticulousness that he displayed in the *Pragmateia* in describing the genesis of the gods and men in the great body of the world. It must be recognized that Manichaeism's ability to resist Islam for as long as it did, particularly in the Iranian world, was due to its powerful esprit de corps, a direct consequence of effective institutional organization.

The Hierarchy of the Church

Apart from the fourth article of the Chinese *Compendium*, there exist two essential texts concerning the composition of the Manichaean Church,

one due to an ex-Manichaean, Augustine, and the other taken from a hymn to the apostles (or missionaries) from Turfan.

In chapter 46 of *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*, composed in 428–29 (shortly before Augustine's death on 28 August 430), the former Manichaean who had gone on to become bishop of Hippo wrote: "The Manichaeans would that their church be composed only of these two states of life [*professiones*], that is, that of the elect [*electi*] and that of the hearers [*auditores*]. . . . From their elect they draw twelve, whom they call masters [*magistri*], plus a thirteenth who is their head [*princeps*]. They also have seventy-two bishops [*episcopi*], who receive their orders from the masters. The bishops also have deacons [*diaconi*]. The rest are called merely the elect [*electi*]."

The "Hymn to the Apostles" conserved in Middle Persian in the Turfan fragments (M 801; see also Mary Boyce, *A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* [Leiden: Brill, 1975], text cu 23–25) enumerates "all the deacons, masters of the house [= administrators], the choirmasters, the sagacious preachers, the valiant scribes, the sweet-voiced cantors, and all the pure and holy brethren [*bradaran*], . . . the virginal and holy sisters [*wxarin*] with their community and monastery, . . . and all the hearers, brothers and sisters, from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South."

The church therefore comprised two great bodies of believers, divided in turn into five classes or grades. On the one hand, there was the mass of lay followers who constituted the economic base of the ecclesiastical society (fifth class). On the other, there was the community of monks in the broad sense of the term, who fell into four classes: those who were monks only in the narrow sense, variously called elect, just, perfect, or holy (fourth class), from whom were recruited a limited number of members of the clergy; the masters of the house [of law], or administrators, who may be likened to the priests of the Christian Church (third class); ministers of worship and servants of the church, in a sense peculiar to the Manichaean term "deacons," analogous to Christian bishops (second class); and finally, confessors and doctors, called "masters" and "apostles," upon whom fell responsibility for the defense of doctrine, the government of the ecclesiastical provinces, and missionary policy (first class). At the

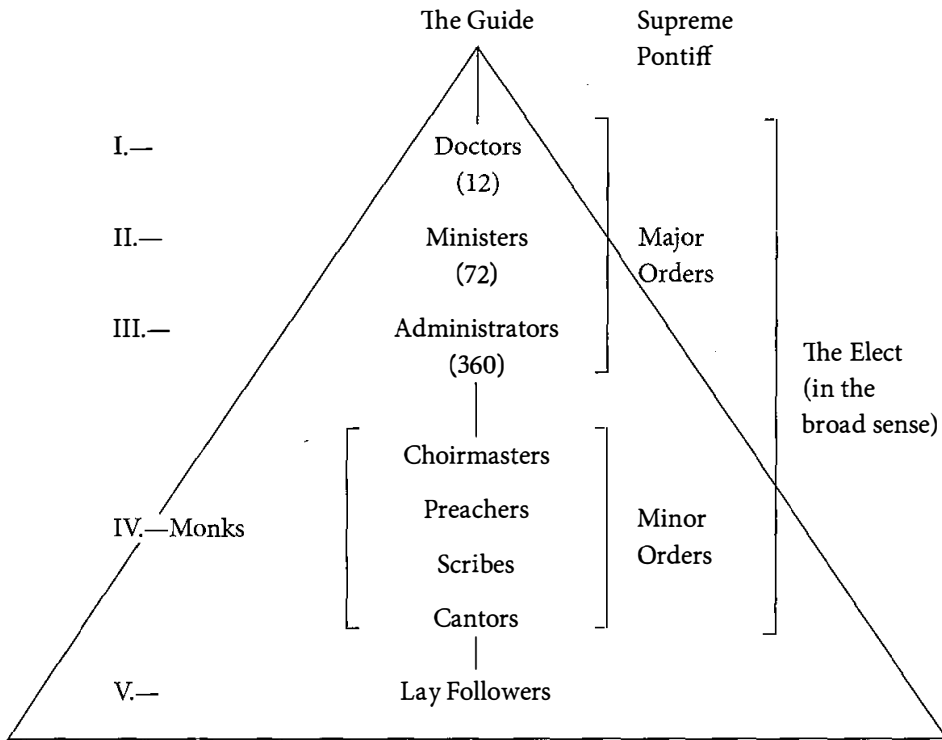


Figure 4. Hierarchy of the Manichaean Church

summit of this pyramid sat the guide of the faithful, Mani's successor in Babylon.

The number of lay persons, belonging to the fifth class, was unlimited as a matter of law and actual practice. In the fourth class, however, as a practical matter, the number of monks was restricted. A quota was attached to each class of the clergy: the administrators of the third class could not exceed 360, a figure corresponding to the number of days in a lunar cycle multiplied by the number of solar months; the maximum number of ministers, or deacons of the second class, was fixed at seventy-two, a figure corresponding to the number of disciples sent on missions by Jesus (see the Gospel according to Luke 10:1 Syr and Tatian, *Diatessaron*); and the number of doctors of the first class was fixed at twelve, on account of the twelve apostles that Jesus chose for himself (Gospel according to Matthew 10:1-2).

The key distinction was not between clergy and laity but between monks

and hearers. For a hearer to become a monk involved a radical change of life that could be approved only by a plenary meeting of the elect (synaxis). Both the laity and the order of monks were composed not only of men (brothers) but also of women (sisters), though accession to the first three classes was reserved for men. Lay brothers and sisters kept their ordinary clothes; male and female monks alike dressed in white and wore white headcloths.

Each group of lay followers had at its head a father-master, who was responsible for conducting services and for making the doctrine of the church comprehensible to his flock. This "elder" brother, known formally as the "master of the hearers" [MP *niyoshagbed*], was recruited from the third class. The lay brothers and sisters were obliged continually to show obedience and deference to their counterparts in the order of monks. On meeting one of them, the hearer knelt as a sign of respect, "so that the hand might be laid upon him as suppliant" (Augustine). Insulting a monk led to immediate expulsion from the church; the same fate befell a monk who publicly violated a commandment, but excommunication could not be pronounced until the matter had been brought before the synaxis and duly deliberated and judged.

Brothers and sisters of the fourth class lived apart from lay followers in monasteries (or temples). Established in cities and administered on the basis of endowment monies and gifts alone, monasteries [MP *manestan*; Persian *khangah*] constituted the true centers of worship of the Manichaean faith, as well as the focus of spiritual life and cultural activity, at least in lands where the religion was not condemned to a clandestine existence. They contained a scriptorium and library ("room of holy books and images") along with an infirmary, a chapter house (for community gatherings), a building for adoration and confession, and another for fasting days. But they had neither gardens nor kitchens, since meals were brought every day by the hearers.

Government of the monastery's affairs was placed under the jurisdiction of the first three grades. The choirmaster [MP *afrinsar*] occupied an eminent rank, as one would expect of a way of life devoted to choral recitation and prayer; he was charged with selecting hymns for the annual cycle of festivals, as well as with composing new ones and determining

the sequence of ceremonies. The preacher [*xrohxwan*] monitored the instruction of the monks and carried the good word to the outside world; his duties included teaching his brothers and sisters to preach. Once trained, they were sent out in their turn to spread the religion—"either to strengthen and support this error where it exists," Augustine said maliciously, "or to plant it where it does not" (*De haeresibus*, 46). For every monk had not only to pray and to sing but also to preach. The masters of the scriptorium [*dibiran*] wrote out the holy books and antiphonaries in a decorative hand. The cantor [*mahršray*] was responsible for the proper execution of liturgical song and for giving his brethren choral instruction. The Chinese *Compendium* mentions another office whose occupant was "in charge of the month," according to Pelliot; according to Gauthiot, he "supervis[ed] the recitation of the sermon"; according to Benveniste, he was "responsible for pious endowments."

The functions of the upper three classes, carried out by a very small number of monks, were subsequently adopted by the hierarchy of the Christian Church in Mesopotamia: (1) doctors [*Syr malpan*] perpetuated the apostolic tradition of the founder through teaching and defense of the doctrine; (2) ministers supported the activity of the church as servants (deacons) and supervisors (bishops) charged with organizing worship and governing the diocese [*MP paygos*]; (3) administrators, or masters of the house [*Gr oikodespotēs*] (also called "elders" [*Gr presbuteros*]), assisted the bishops in pastoral tasks and managed the affairs of the community. The ecclesiastical title "master of the house" came from Qumran by way of the Babylonian baptist rite in which Mani was raised. As for the fundamental conception of monks and lay followers as distinct and complementary, the former assuring the latter eternal salvation in exchange for material subsistence, this was taken over directly from Buddhism. Manichaean monasticism cannot be reduced to the Christian model, then, since Mani's monks did not seek to remove themselves from the world in isolated, self-sufficient communities; nor can Manichaean prophetology and eschatology be reduced to the pre-Valentinian model, since the distinctive features of Manichaeism—its doctrine of prophecy and ecclesiastical structure—root it in history and in institutions.

Figure 5. Comparative Nomenclature of Classes and Positions

	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Coptic</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Pahlavi</i>	<i>Parthian</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Syriac</i>
The Guide	arkhēgos	p-arkhēgos	princeps	sarar	sarar	yen-mo	imam	qphalpala
I.—Doctors								
Synon.:								
masters	didaskaloi	n-sah	magistri	hammozagan	ammozhagan	mu-chō	mu'allimun	malpane
apostles	apostoloi	n-apostolos		frestagan				
II.—Ministers								
Synon.:								
deacons		n-shnshete	diaconi	ispasagan	ispasagan	sa-po-sai	mushammisun	mshamshane
bishops	episcopoi	n-episcopos	episcopi			fu-to-tan		
III.—Administrators	oikodespotai			mansararan	mansardaran			
Synon.:								
priests	presbuteroi	n-presbuteros	presbyteri	mahistagan		mo-hi-si-tō	qissisun	qashishe
IV.—Monks			religiosi	denawaran	denabaran	tien-na-wu		
Synon.:								
the elect	eklektoi	n-sōtp	electi	wizidagan	wizhidagan			
the just	dikaioi	n-dikaiois		ardawan	ardawan	a-lo-huan	siddiqun	zaddiqe
the perfect			perfecti					
the holy		netouabe	sancti					
Positions:								
choirmasters				afrinsaran	afriwansaran			
preachers				xrohxwanan				
scribes				dibiran	dibiran			
cantors	psaltai	n-psaltēs		mahrsrayan				
V.—Lay Followers								
Synon.:								
hearers			auditores	niyoshagan	nigoshagan	nu-cha-yen	samma'un	shamu'e
catechumens	katēkhoudenoi	n-katēkhoumenos						

The Moral Code of the Monks

According to the Pahlavi “Hymn to the Apostles” (M 801), strict observance of the five commandments [*andarzan*] and the three seals [*muhran*] was required of all monks. The Sogdian formulary of confession for the elect, contained in the second part of M 801, described the content of the five commandments in great detail; unfortunately the surviving fragments concern only the (complete) second and (partial) third commandments, plus a few lines of the fourth. By contrast, the complete list of the five commandments is reproduced in Sogdian (M 14 V) and in Coptic (Hymn 235) for the Bema festival:

Sogdian	Coptic
1. Truth	Do not lie
2. Nonviolence	Do not kill
3. Religious behavior	Do not eat meat
4. Purity of mouth	Be pure
5. Blessed poverty	Blessed poverty

The three seals [Lat *tria signacula*; Ar *thalath khawatin*] express in the mode of corporeal symbolism the content of the three commandments that the laity was bound to observe in part. The seal of the mouth [Lat *signaculum oris*] refers to the fourth commandment; the seal of the hands [Lat *signaculum manuum*], or peace of the hands [Copt *pmtan nncij*], to the second; the seal of the bosom (heart) [Lat *signaculum sinus*], or virginal purity [Copt *ptoubo ntparthenia*], to the third.

◎ ◎ 1. First Commandment

Called “Truth” in Sogdian [*reshtyaq*], the first commandment prohibits lying in the broad sense of the term, that is, any attitude contradicting the profession of religious faith. Inasmuch as the essential aspect of the life of the elect was openness and obedience to the Holy Spirit that had come down into Mani, apostle of truth, and that continued to act upon and within the church, the imperative of truth can be seen as a theological justification of the virtue of obedience to the will of the founder. The first commandment thus gave the entire religious life of the elect its

fundamental orientation: in order to be capable, as Mani had been, “of wandering continually in the world to preach and to guide” (the formula is due to al-Biruni), the monk had to anchor himself firmly in the truth, that is, place himself wholly in the service of the apostolic mission of the founder by accepting the authority of his church.

◎ ◎ 2. Second Commandment

Of all the moral principles imposed upon the monk, none surprised Christian and Muslim adversaries of Manichaeism more than this one. In enjoining the monk to “nonviolence” [Sogd *puazarmya*], in the literal sense of the word, the second commandment, or seal of the hands, forbade the monk from engaging in any violent act liable to injure one of the five elements—light, fire, water, wind, air—that are found in a mixed state in living creatures, or in plants, or in nature itself. The cosmological foundation of this commandment had to do with the conviction that imprisoned in every composite body are particles of pure light that await release; taken together, these particles form an immense cross of light [Lat *crux luminis*] extending throughout the world that recalls and perpetuates the suffering of Jesus [Lat *Iesus patibilis*]. Since shattering any composite body risks causing damage to the delicate light elements themselves, and so to the cross of light and heavenly Jesus as well, the second commandment ordered the monk not to kill or to injure, even if only a plant or small animal would be harmed.

Hence the prohibition against agricultural labor: “The harvest workers, who do the reaping, are like the archons, who were in darkness from the beginning, when they ate of the armor of the First Man. So they must be transformed into grass or beans or barley or wheat or vegetables, so that they too can be harvested and cut down,” declared Turbo in the *Acta Archelai* [the Latin version of this work conserved in the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae identifies Turbo with Mani’s disciple Adda]. “If anyone kills a bird, he shall become a bird; if anyone kills a mouse, he shall become in his turn a mouse. . . . If a man reaps, he shall be reaped; and so, too, if anyone casts grain into the mill, he shall be cast into it in his turn; whoever kneads shall also be kneaded, whoever bakes bread shall also be baked himself” (9.2–9.8). Nonviolence also required that remedies devised by sorcerers to treat wounds and heal the sick not be used and that certain

medicinal preparations not be administered. The least part of nature was to be respected: a clump of earth, a puddle of water, a flake of snow, a drop of dew. A monk who inadvertently damaged one or another of the copyist's utensils—brush, tablet, paper—was also liable to be accused before his brothers of having infringed the second commandment.

◎ ◎ 3. The Third Commandment

Known in Sogdian as “behavior in accordance with religion” [*dentchihreft*], the third commandment, or seal of the bosom, obliged the monk to practice not only continence but also total chastity, both in the strict sense, through the prohibition of all sexual relations (Manichaean monks, male and female alike, swore a vow of celibacy for life), and in the broader sense, through the prohibition of all contact by which pleasure might be obtained, if only by touching snow, dew, or a fine fabric. To take a bath was to commit two sins: against the second commandment, on account of the injury caused to the water, and against the third, because the contact of the water with the skin produced an agreeable sensation. The third commandment forbade monks from committing any act that might favor, directly or indirectly, the reproduction of living beings, animals, or plants. Thus, if cutting down a tree contravened the second commandment, planting one was an infraction of the third: “He who has planted a [fruit-yielding tree] shall pass through several bodies until the [tree] has been felled.” The theological reason for this was simple: to encourage reproduction was to endlessly retard the process by which the particles of light trapped in the bodies of living things were finally and permanently liberated.

◎ ◎ 4. Fourth Commandment

Known in Sogdian as “purity of mouth” [*qutchizpartyā*], the fourth commandment, or seal of the mouth, was mainly concerned with dietary prohibitions. Meats, fermented drinks (beer, wine, or rice alcohol), and dairy products of any sort were proscribed because their preparation involved a series of violent acts harmful to the luminous souls contained in them. Manichaean monks were therefore strict vegetarians. Even so, their ascetic vows obliged them to show extreme care in choosing among the fruits and vegetables offered to them, and prepared for their consumption, by the lay faithful. Further constraining their appetite for edible nourish-

ment were the rigorous and protracted fasts that punctuated the calendar of monastic life. Moreover, the fourth commandment concerned not only what enters the mouth but also what comes out of it: words. In matters of speech, as in other things, monks were obliged to observe the moderation and respectful form of utterance appropriate to one who loved the justice of the prophet's church and therefore not to malign or slander any other person or to lie, blaspheme, swear, or perjure themselves.

◉ ◉ 5. Fifth Commandment

The last commandment enjoined monks to lead a life of poverty [Sogd *dushtautch*]—"blessed poverty," according to both the Sogdian prose fragment on the New Man (M 14 V) and a Bema hymn in Coptic (no. 235 in the Medinet Medi *Psalm Book* codex [ed. Allberry]), echoing the beatitude of the poor proclaimed by Jesus as the condition of entering the kingdom of heaven. Monks were permitted neither to accumulate personal possessions nor to acquire any goods, apart (according to al-Biruni) from a day's supply of food and enough clothing for a year. The complete destitution of the elect made him a free man, able to devote himself entirely to preaching and prayer, and a "blessed" man in the evangelical sense—in sum, a happy man.

Upright, nonviolent, chaste, abstinent, and poor—such was the Manichaean monk who practiced the five commandments laid down by Mani to express his ideal of evangelical blessedness and purpose. Polemicists on all sides were united in denigrating the morality of the Manichaeans, which they saw as proof of unfathomable stupidity and maliciousness. The Muslim al-Biruni was the only ancient writer, at least to my knowledge, to recognize that the kind of life required of Manichaean monks in fact set a very high moral standard and the only one to defend Mani against the "grotesque" charge that he would have approved, among other things, pederasty. Manichaean ethics, regarded as diabolical and insane in the West, had the effect among the peoples of Upper Asia of helping to moderate bloodthirsty behavior: "Countries with barbaric customs where blood used to stream," al-Biruni noted (in Pelliot's translation), "were transformed into a land where one ate vegetables; states where one used to kill were transformed into a kingdom where one exhorted oth-

ers to do good.” These lines, taken from a trilingual inscription found in Karabalghasun, on the Orkhon River, that recounts the early history of Manichaeism in the Uighur Empire of Bögü Khan, suggest the civilizing impact of such an ethics in Turco-Mongolian lands in the second half of the eighth century.

The Moral Code of the Laity

The lay followers were not an inferior class of Manichaean whose sole usefulness consisted in justifying Augustine’s caustic remark: “To those who were called ‘elect’ and ‘holy’ [*electi et sancti*] we brought foods, out of which, in the workshop of their stomachs, they were to make us angels and gods, by whom we might be liberated” (*Confessions* 4.1.1). Lay men and women were members of the church on the same level with monks, and their functions, although different, were complementary. The layman allowed the monk to devote himself completely to the service of prayer and speech; the monk assured the layman of eternal salvation through the counsels that he imparted and the liturgical celebrations that he conducted. Thus the moral code of lay followers who remained in one place was not fundamentally different from that of monks called to apostolic nomadism: it corresponded to a different way of life.

The canonical obligations of the hearers are known through a formulary of confession intended specifically for them, the *Xvastvaneft*, a complete version of which is conserved in Old Turkish. The sequence of these simple and clear rituals, which are of five kinds, immediately calls to mind the five pillars of Islam. The similarity is not at all accidental, for just as Manichaeism furnished Islam with the essential elements of its prophetology, it also supplied the basis for Islamic ritual:

Manichaeism	Islam
1. Commandments	Profession of faith
2. Prayer	Prayer
3. Alms	Alms
4. Fasting	Fasting
5. Confession of sins	Pilgrimage

◎ ◎ 1. The Ten Commandments

These summarized the major articles of the Manichaean credo: love, faith, fear of God, and wisdom, sealed in the heart of the hearers by the four gods. The Uighur formulary refers explicitly to these gods and their qualities: the absolute transcendence of the Father, whose greatness depends only on the Good (I.2); the goodness of the Living Spirit, demiurge of the sun and the moon, by whom the light becomes separated from the darkness each day (II.2); the life and power of the Primal Man, whose five luminous elements form the limbs of the soul (III.2); and the wisdom of the messengers, prophets of God and bearers of salvation—in other words, the community of monks (IV.2).

The purpose of the ten commandments was to regulate the conduct of the laity as a consequence of this profession of faith.

1. The first commandment required hearers to renounce idolatry. The abandonment of idols implied a rejection of anthropomorphism, for the supreme God [= the Father of Greatness] gives neither life nor death. To attribute to him what does not depend on him was a sin; to appeal to the devil, that is, to the author of evil, as a god came under the same prohibition. This first imperative concerned the whole self or person, the nine others being distributed among three seals: mouth, heart, hands (IX.1).

2. Hearers were to monitor the purity of the mouth by refraining from blasphemy, lying, perjury, false witness, and slander; they had always to stand up for the innocent.

3. Meat and fermented beverages were to be excluded from the tables of the laity.

4. Hearers were to abstain from all inappropriate speech, especially that which was irreverent toward the prophets, for monks were the “true messengers of God” and did only good works (IV.2).

5. The heart of the hearer was to remain faithful to the man or woman who had been taken in marriage, and hearers were to refrain from all sexual relations during fasting days. Polygamy was condemned on the same ground as adultery.

6. Hearers were to come to the aid of the afflicted and refrain from all displays of greed.

7. They were to take care not to obey false prophets and impostors, that is, excommunicated or renegade Manichaeans.

8. The hearer was to avoid using his hands to frighten, injure, beat, torture, or kill not only human bipeds but also four-legged animals, birds, fish, and reptiles. Nor could his ten fingers cause suffering to the Living Self (III.3).

9. The hearer was to take care not to commit theft or fraud.

10. Finally, he was to refrain from all magical practices, forswearing the fabrication of charms, potions, and evil spells.

◎ ◎ 2. Prayer

The lay Manichaean was bound to observe four daily prayers, spaced between dawn and night (on rising, at midday and sunset, and after dark). During the day they had to be made facing the sun and in the evening, facing the moon; if the sun or the moon were not visible, he was to pray toward the north and the Pole Star. From the earliest days of the faith, this obligation [*qibla*] aroused attacks and erroneous interpretations on all sides. Mani responded to them in the *Mysteries*: “Sun and moon are our path and the gate through which we make our way in the world of our existence”—that is, toward the heavenly homeland. Ritual and prayer were strictly regulated: purifications and ablutions were required as a condition of entering a place of worship; formulas had to be recited correctly and in their entirety; the proper gestures and prostrations had to be performed while praying. To neglect one of these points, or to be inattentive to them, was sinful.

◎ ◎ 3. Alms

This obligation fell specifically on lay followers, just as poverty did on monks. In giving a tenth (or seventh) of his possessions, the hearer was purified of worldly works and, in this way, allowed the community of his brothers [and sisters], the elect, to discharge their duty of prayer and preaching. Almsgiving was therefore a service to the church, a communal manifestation of justice. If a hearer was prevented from obeying this rule, on account of poverty, destitution, or some other reason, he was nonetheless bound to ask forgiveness for having failed to fulfill his duty.

Typically it took the form of gifts: bread, fruits, vegetables, clothes, or sandals. It could also take other forms depending on the person's social importance: ransom of a captive, slave, or prisoner; substantial aid in rescuing distant brothers from distress; the temporary loan of a servant, relative, or son to help the community; the endowment of various functions placed under the administrative authority of the church hierarchy; or maintenance of monastery buildings or responsibility for additions to them. As the financial lifeblood of the church, alms were an occasion of sharing and exchange: in giving a part of his possessions, the layman obtained salvation; by accepting alms, the monk entered into an apprenticeship of true poverty, the *sine qua non* of holiness.

◎ ◎ 4. Fasting

Like monks, hearers were obliged to observe a cycle of fasting on both a weekly and a yearly basis. The weekly fast took place on Sunday, day of the sun. This meant having not only to abstain from food and all sexual relations but also to forgo all worldly labor. The dominical fast served to unite the church, for on this day the layman was a full-fledged member of his community, in no way different from the monk. Yet observance of this fast was by no means universal, particularly among notables, merchants, and breeders of livestock (the version of the *Xvastvaneft* in use among the Turkish-speaking Manichaean populations of Upper Asia during the eighth to tenth centuries mentions managers of great estates, faced with the demands of tending to both domesticated animals and roaming herds, as well as ordinary people suffering from poverty and frail health). To miss a fast—voluntarily or involuntarily, whether through laziness or negligence—was a sin. Hearers were bound also to observe an annual fast of thirty days, which itself was preceded at regular intervals by very brief fasts associated with feast days and culminating in the celebration of the Bema festival. The obligation to fast was subject to many different interpretations, both over time and from country to country. Contact with Islam, and the spirit of competition to which it gave rise, had the effect of strengthening the insistence of the church hierarchy on strict observance, particularly with regard to fasting.

◎ ◎ 5. Confession of Sins

Weekly confession took place on Monday, day of the moon, for hearers as well as the elect. The hearer knelt down before the monk, his brother, and asked forgiveness for every sin of thought, word, and deed. The annual confession was collective and took place at the end of the thirty-day fast, when the community came together to celebrate the passion of the Lord, that is, to commemorate the tragic events that marked Mani's last days on earth. An officiant, acting on behalf of the hearers, recited the confessional formulas composed especially for them (to save time he could confine himself to the final formula), with the result that all the sins of the past year were pardoned, and the lay members of the church were able to enter into the celebration of the community's great festival with the innocent heart of a newborn infant.

The Liturgy

The festival cycle of the Manichaean Church (which in Christian regions included Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost) was based on an idealized reconstruction of the major dates of its founder's life: Mani's birth, the call of the angel, the dispatch of the prophet, his passion and death, and the martyrdom of the first apostles. Each festival had the threefold purpose of commemorating a past event, realizing the communion of the faithful through the pardon of sins and the singing of hymns, and announcing the triumph of the (true) religion at the Final Judgment. And by dividing the planetary year into periods, the festival cycle actualized and recapitulated the three times of earthly history: the past origins of the church, the present moment of its ecclesiastical life, and the expectation and hope of final matters.

What was true of each festival was especially true of the most solemn of all Manichaean occasions, the Bema (from the Greek word meaning "dais," "tribune," "seat," "chair," or "throne" [Syr *bima*, MP *gah*]). In the architecture of Syriac Christian churches, the bema, erected in the middle of the nave, was the episcopal throne from which the bishop presided and the good news was proclaimed. In Manichaean churches and places

of worship, where it was constructed as a raised platform having five levels or steps, covered with precious fabrics and placed in full view of the congregation, the dais symbolized the five classes of the hierarchy. The top level was left vacant, however, for in commemorating Mani's reign the Bema festival perpetuated the memory of a leader who, invisibly, continued to instruct, judge, and guide his community.

The Bema was for Manichaeans what Easter was for Christians, namely, the festival to which all others led. The essential features of the Manichaean event were borrowed from its Christian counterpart: date (the vernal equinox), preparations (vigils and fasts of long duration), and significance (celebration of a passion). Although Manichaeans had never ceased to celebrate Easter, it was soon eclipsed in importance by the Bema, for the Christian festival celebrated what in the eyes of the Manichaeans was only apparently a passion and death (since the heavenly Jesus was incapable either of being born or of dying), whereas the Manichaean festival commemorated a man who had really suffered and who had really died. It was therefore in relation to Mani alone that Easter was a true passover, that is, a passing over from death to life, from the night of suffering and exile to the light of blessed eternity, from the prison of the body and the world to deliverance from the cycle of rebirths.

The Bema was indissociable from the fasts that preceded it, for the calendrical rules governing the computation of these fast dates served also to determine the date of the ultimate solemnities. The old calendar of the Manichaean Church of Babylon is known to us in its main features from Ibn al-Nadim's account. An initial fast of two days took place when the moon was full, the sun being in Sagittarius (= 14–15 November). With the first appearance of the next new moon plus one ("when the crescent begins to come into view"), a second fast of two continuous days (= 1–2 January) took place. A third fast of equal duration coincided with the next full moon, when the sun was in Capricorn (= 14–15 January). A fourth, discontinuous fast of thirty days, during which fasting was interrupted each evening after the setting of the sun, began with the advent of the new moon once the sun had entered into Aquarius, that is, on the eighth day of the month—this by synchronic analogy with the dates traditionally assigned to Mani's passion (= 8 February to 8 March). Thus from late autumn until late winter, Manichaeans of all ranks performed a series of

three forty-eight-hour fasts in memory of their holy martyrs, followed by a fourth and final month-long fast in memory of the founder of their faith, closing out the liturgical year.

The cycle of fasting culminated with the celebration of the Bema. Just as the beginning of the great annual fast (8 February) was made to correspond to Mani's imprisonment and the fastening of his chains, the end of the fast (8 March) fell on the canonical date of his deliverance and his ascent to heaven. Apart from eighth- to ninth-century Manichaean miniatures from Chotcho (Xotcho), the bulk of the surviving documentation concerning the Bema consists of the first part of M 801 (in Middle Persian and Parthian) and a Sogdian fragment (T II D 123) published by Henning. The texts do not give the first part of the ceremony, but it seems likely to have opened with a reading of Mani's passion, from the moment of his crucifixion [= imprisonment] until the leaving of his body [death and ascension]. We know that prayers of intercession were then addressed to Mani, punctuated by hymns of praise. Next came the solemn celebration of Mani's *Gospel*, a copy of which was held up by an officiant for adoration by the faithful. This was succeeded by a general confession of sins, made by means of formularies read out by the ministers in the name of the congregation and accompanied by the singing of three hymns beseeching Mani for forgiveness. After this penitential rite came a reading of the "Letter of the Seal" [MP *muhr dib*]¹—the last message that Mani, seal of the prophets, wrote for his followers shortly before his death—followed by a hymn glorifying the apostle ascendant in heaven and his triumphant church. Then came communion, a holy banquet offered to the elect by the hearers at which fine fruits, particularly rich in light particles, were shared and eaten. The feast concluded with songs of thanksgiving.

The entire night preceding the Bema celebration was passed in prayers and songs; indeed, most of the hymns bearing the festival's name that are conserved in the Turfan texts and the Coptic Psalm Book were composed for this service. In the early hours the doors of the shrine were opened wide to let in the sun's first rays. As the hymn to the dawn (likening Mani to the rising sun) resounded throughout the space, the hearers entered bearing gifts of fruit and bread, which they placed on a golden tripod and on the communion table in front of the dais. Around the table, bowls were gradually filled with armfuls of roses collected by the hearers. Juice

from the fruits was poured into a golden vase from which the elect would drink. A linen veil covered the five-tiered dais, which represented the throne of Mani, who, represented by his icon, was shown symbolically as seated at the summit of his church. The Manichaeans' great day of joy thus began in the midst of flowers, colors, and songs. In the words of the Bema Psalm (*Psalm Book 2* p. 8, 14–21): "Greetings, Bema of victory! Now this day all the trees have been made new again! Now the roses display their beauty, for the withe that blanched their petals has been severed! The air is everywhere luminous, and the earth pushes up its blossoms, the waves of the sea are calmed, for the dark winter that overflowed with torment has fled."

The Pantheon

Mani, a poet and a visionary, worked out his ideas about the nature of things, about their causes and their modalities, within the literary framework of an account of legends, the *Pragmateia*—for he was neither a philosopher nor a theologian, neither Greek nor Jewish. To his mind, the cardinal virtue of the historical Messiah (Jesus) was to have destroyed the Jewish Bible, that is, to have demonstrated the falsity of a religion founded on the law. But it remained to communicate the revelation: to show why evil had come to be mixed with good; to expose the true genesis of things, since the other Genesis had been abolished; to provide a history that says everything and explains everything from start to finish—beginning, middle, end; in short, to state the Two Principles and the Three Times (or Epochs).

To make such a revelation belonged by right to the seal of prophecy, since the prophet was supposed to embody the fullness of wisdom and knowledge. Thus it was that Mani the writer began by saying what had impressed Mani the reader of apocalypses: he wrote the *Shabuhragan*, his first book, to describe the final time or state (of separation). In order to recount in detail the early and middle times (of nonlimitation and mixture, respectively), he wrote the *Pragmateia*. Whereas the *Shabuhragan* announced a hope, the *Pragmateia* expounded a tragic myth. Rather than draw up a composite summary of this latter work from extant sources, I will give the version of it transmitted in the late eighth century by the Nestorian doctor Theodore bar Konai, who had made his own summary on the basis of a Syriac copy of the *Pragmateia*. Though composed in a haphazard fashion and sprinkled with errors introduced by copyists, this text stands still today as the most complete version of the Manichaean myth as Mani had conceived and written it.

I have added a small amount of transitional commentary, set in *italic*, to make it easier to follow the tale.

The Narrative

◉ ◉ 1. The Early Time

Before the existence of the heavens and of the earth and of everything that is in them, there were two natures [*kyanin*], the one good, the other bad. The good nature inhabited the land [or “world”] of light, which Mani called Father of Greatness [*abba d-rabbutha*]. Apart from him were his dwellings [or “realms”—*skinatha*]: reason, sense, thought, reflection, intention. The bad nature Mani called King of Darkness [*mlek heshuka*], who lived in his dark land, in his five dark worlds: the world of smoke, the world of fire, the world of wind, the world of water, and the world of darkness.

◉ ◉ 2. The Middle Time

A. THE FIRST WAR (a) *Outbreak of hostilities: the King of Darkness glimpses the beauty of the land of light and prepares to mount an assault upon it.* When the King of Darkness contemplated climbing up toward the land of light, its five dwellings feared for their safety.

(b) *The Father of Greatness resolves to respond to the attack of the King of Darkness through an initial series of “Calls” (First Creation).* The Father of Greatness thought and said: “I will not send any of my dwellings, any of these five realms, into combat because it was for prosperity and peace that they were created by me, but it is myself [*b-nafshey*] who will go and make war!” Mani says that the Father of Greatness called [*qra*] the Mother of Life (the Living) [*emma d-hayye*], the Mother of Life called the Primal (First) Man [*nasha qadmaya*], and the Primal Man called his five sons [or “arms”], like one who arms himself to do battle.

(c) *Defeat of the Primal Man.* Then there came out to meet the Primal Man an angel by the name of Nahashbat, who held in his hand the crown of victory. The angel spread out the light before the Primal Man. On seeing this the King of Darkness thought and said: “What I searched for far away I have found close at hand.” Then the Primal Man offered himself

[*nafsh-eh*] and his five sons as nourishment to the five sons of darkness, like one who, having an enemy, mixes a deadly poison into a cake and offers it to him. When the sons of darkness had eaten, the intelligence of the Five Shining Gods [*ziwane* = sons of the First Man] was toppled. They were like a man bitten by a rabid dog or by a serpent, this on account of the venom of the sons of darkness.

(d) *Second reply of the Father of Greatness, who issues a fresh series of Calls (Second Creation), and rescue of the Primal Man by the Living Spirit.* Intelligence having returned to him, the Primal Man addressed seven times a prayer to the Father of Greatness. The Father of Greatness called [second call (*qrayta*)] the Friend of the Lights. The Friend of the Lights called the Great Builder [*ban rabba*], the Great Builder called the Living Spirit [*ruha hayya*], and the Living Spirit called his five sons: the Ornament of Splendor [*sfat ziwa*], so called for his reason [Gr *noūs*, Lat *mens*]; the Great King of Magnificence [*malka rabba d-iqara*], for his sense [= powers of perception]; the Adamas (or Adamant) of Light [*Adamas-nuhra*], for his thought [= practical understanding]; the King of Glory [*mlek shubha*], for his reflection [= powers of deliberation]; and the Porter (or Atlas) [*subbala*], for his intention [= ability to plan]. They went into the land of darkness, where they found the Primal Man swallowed up by the darkness and his five sons. Then the Living Spirit called out in a loud voice. The voice of the Living Spirit was like a sharp sword, and it laid bare the form of the Primal Man and said to him: "Peace be with you, who are the good amid the wicked, the light amid the darkness, the god who dwells amid wrathful animals that know not the magnificence [of the sons of light]!" Then the Primal Man responded, saying: "Come in peace, you who bring the wages of prosperity and peace." And moreover the Primal Man said to him: "How goes it with our fathers, the sons of light, in their abode?" And the Call [*qraya*] said to him: "They are well." The Call and the Response [*naya*] joined with one another and together ascended to the Mother of Life and to the Living Spirit. And the Living Spirit clothed himself in the Call, and the Mother of Life clothed herself in the Response, her beloved child. Then they descended into the land of darkness, where they found the Primal Man and his sons. *The rest of the story is known from Keph. 9 and the account given by Turbo in the Acta Archelai (7.7):* The Living Spirit held out his right hand to the Primal Man and drew him out of the

darkness. The Mother of Life embraced her son and kissed him. Then the Primal Man was brought back in triumph among his family in the land of light. *End of the first war, return to the text of Theodore bar Konai.*

B. INTERLUDE I: THE DEMIURGICAL WORK OF THE LIVING SPIRIT (a) *Slaughter of the archons, whose spoils are used to make the world.* Then the Living Spirit commanded three of his sons, telling one to kill and another to flay the archons, sons of darkness, in order that they be brought to the Mother of Life. And the Mother of Life [gave her orders, and the Living Spirit] spread out the sky with their skins and made eleven heavens. Then the three sons of the Living Spirit threw their corpses onto the land of darkness and made eight earths [= layers of the world].

(b) *The sons of the Living Spirit are charged with watching over the cosmos.* And the five sons of the Living Spirit were all invested with their own responsibilities: the Ornament of Splendor was charged with supporting the Five Shining Gods by their loins, and beneath their loins the heavens were spread out; the Porter, with bending one of his knees and supporting the earths; and after the heavens and the earths had been made, the Great King of Magnificence sat in the middle of the sky and watched to see that they were held in place.

(c) *Making of the sun and the moon and creation of the cosmic wheels.* Then the Living Spirit manifested his forms to the sons of darkness. With the light that they had swallowed and that came from these Five Shining Gods, he brought about a [first] filtering of the light and made the sun and the moon. With the light that was left over, from these vessels [or “ships of light”], he made wheels of wind, water, and fire. Then he descended and fixed [mss: formed] them from beneath near the Porter. And the King of Glory called [= created] and established for them an orbit so that they could make their ascent by passing above the archons, who were divided among the earths. [The] purpose [of the wheels] was to serve the Five Shining Gods and to prevent them from being consumed by the poison of the archons.

C. INTERLUDE II: COMPLETION OF THE WORLD’S CREATION BY THE MESSENGER (a) *Third Call (or Creation).* *The Messenger sets in motion the cosmic machine.* Mani said that then the Mother of Life, the

Primal Man, and the Living Spirit rose to pray and that they invoked the Father of Greatness. He heard them and called, third call, the Messenger [*izgadda*]. And the Messenger called the Twelve Virgins with their vestments, their crowns, and their attributes. The first was royalty; the second, wisdom; the third, innocence; the fourth, persuasion; the fifth, purity; the sixth, firmness; the seventh, faith; the eighth, endurance; the ninth, uprightness; the tenth, goodness; the eleventh, justice; and the twelfth, light. And when the Messenger reached the vessels [= the sun and moon], he directed three servants to set them in motion. And the Great Builder was directed by him to construct a new earth and [to activate] the three wheels to make them rise up.

(b) *The Messenger manifests himself to provoke an ejaculation by the archons.* Once the vessels had begun to move and reached the middle of the sky, then did the Messenger manifest his male and female forms, and he was perceived by all the archons, sons of darkness, male and female. At the sight of the Messenger in the beauty of his forms, all the archons burned with desire for him: the males for the female figure and the females for the male figure. And they began to let escape, along with their desire, the light that they had swallowed and that came from the Five Shining Gods. It was then that the sin [= sperm] of the archons was contained, for having been mixed with the light that had come out of the archons, like a hair in a cake, it sought to enter [the Messenger at the same time as the light].

(c) *The Messenger hides himself to begin separating the light from "sin" (origin of the vegetable and animal world).* Then did the Messenger conceal his forms and separate from the light of the Five Shining Gods the sin [= sperm] of the archons. And the sin, which had fallen from the archons, fell back onto them. But they did not accept it, like someone who is disgusted by his own vomit. The sin then fell onto the earth, half of it onto the wet [= water] and half onto the dry [= land]. The half that had fallen onto the wet became a monstrous beast in the likeness of the King of Darkness. And the Adamas of Light was dispatched against it, did battle with it, vanquished it, turned it over on its back, and thrust a spear through its heart. Then he brought down his shield upon its mouth and put one foot on its haunches and the other on its breast. As for the half that had fallen onto the dry, it gave birth to five trees. *End of the creation of the world.*

D. THE SECOND WAR (a) *Outbreak of hostilities. The demons undertake a countercreation (Adam and Eve) to perpetuate the exile of the light particles through the human race.* Mani said that these daughters of darkness were pregnant from the beginning on account of their own nature, and that because of the beauty of the forms of the Messenger they had glimpsed, their fetuses were aborted and fell to earth, where they ate the shoots of the trees. And the abortions deliberated among themselves and recalled the form of the Messenger that they had seen, saying, "Where is the form that we saw?" And Ashaqlun, son of the King of Darkness, said to the abortions, "Give me your sons and your daughters, and I shall make you a form like the one that you saw!" They brought them to him and gave them to him. He ate the males and gave the females to Nebroel (Namrael), his companion. And Nebroel and Ashaqlun came together, and Nebroel conceived of him and gave birth to a son, whom she called Adam. Then she conceived and gave birth to a daughter, whom she called Eve.

(b) *Reply of the Father of Greatness. Jesus the Splendor is dispatched to rouse Adam from his torpor.* And Mani said that Jesus the Splendor approached the innocent Adam and awakened him from the sleep of death, so that he might be delivered from an overabundant spirit, as if a righteous man found someone to be possessed of a dreadful demon and silenced it by his art. Thus was Adam also [released], when the friend [= Jesus the Splendor] found him plunged into a deep sleep, wakened him, shook him and roused him from his torpor, drove the seductive demon far away from him, and bound up the far-reaching female archon far away from him. And thus did Adam examine his soul [*nafsh-eh*] and know who he was. And Jesus the Splendor showed him the fathers on high [= the five intellectual faculties], and his own self [= Adam], thrust entire into the jaws of the leopard and into the jaws of the elephant, swallowed by the swallowers and sucked by the suckers, devoured by the dogs and mixed and imprisoned in all that exists, and shackled in the stench of darkness. Then Jesus the Splendor made Adam stand and taste of the tree of life. Then did Adam look and weep, and let out a great cry like the roaring lion. He tore out his hair and beat his breast, saying: "Woe, woe upon the maker of my body and upon the one who has shackled my soul and upon the rebels that have enslaved me!" *The second war, ended*

among the gods, has now only just begun among men. It will last until the last particle of light is freed from the material mixture of the world and reunites the Perfect Man with the five Intellectual Splendors of the Father.

◎ ◎ 3. The Final Time

Theodore bar Konai says nothing of the final time, and this because eschatology did not enter into the purpose of the *Pragmateia*. It need merely be noted that the final time was to witness the third and last war, called the “great war” in the Manichaean sources and described by Mani in the *Shabuhragan*. The successive episodes that mark these last ends (persecutions of the faithful, followed by universal triumph of the Manichaean Church, parousia of Jesus, last judgment, crumbling of the worlds and conflagration, and the definitive separation of natures) all belong in the main to the Judeo-Christian apocalyptic literature with which Mani became acquainted as an adolescent.

Synopsis of the Manichaean Pantheon

Three essential features—polarity, quinariness, polyonymy—characterize the Manichaean pantheon. Polarity, wrongly identified with metaphysical dualism, is the dialectical game (Manichaeans said “combat”) to which gods and antigods devoted themselves in the world and in the bodies of the living. The role of the demons and of their supreme leader, who occupied the southern lands of mythic space, was not to challenge the transcendence and supremacy of the First Established One, who inhabited the Septentrion, but instead to serve as parasitic (though absolutely necessary) foils to the work of the gods of the three creations. Mani had no wish to devise an original demonology; the quite rudimentary one found in the international folklore of his time amply sufficed in his view for the purpose of elaborating what for him was the essential thing: theogony.

Quinariness was the specific organizing principle of theogony. This topic will be treated in the following section.

Polyonymy, that is, the superimposition of names given to a single god in the various spoken languages of Manichaeism, has been explained as an effect of syncretism or an argument from missionary doctrine. In Mani’s thought it was the direct consequence of a cultural milieu in which

the names of national gods served only to describe functions within the hierarchical organization of heavenly space.

◉ ◉ 1. Demonology

King of Darkness (c)

Other names: Devil (Gr, Lat, Copt); Satan (Ar); Ahremen (MP, Parth, OT); Shimanu/Shimnu (Sogd, OT); Prince of Darkness (Lat, Copt); Great Archon (Gr, Lat); Matter (Syr, Gr, Lat); Evil (Lat).

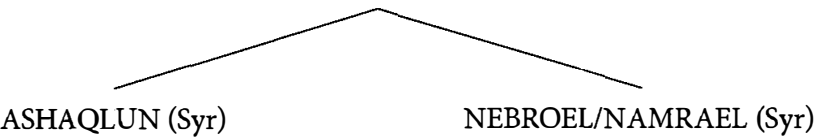


Figure 6.

Other names of Ashaqlun [= Shaqlun: MP, Parth, Sogd, Ar; Saclas: Gr, Lat, Copt]: Prince of Rutting (Gr); Lu-yi (Chin); Desire [Parth: *Awarzhog*]; Son of the King of Darkness (c). Other names of Nebroel/Namrael: Concupiscence, or Greed [MP, Parth, Sogd: Az]; Ye-lo-yang (Chin); Wife of Saclas (c).

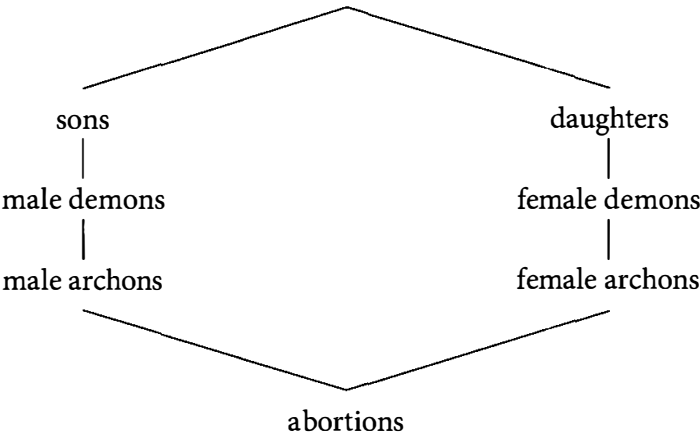


Figure 7.

◉ ◉ 2. Theogony

Father of Greatness

Other names: Father of Light (Parth); Magnificent Father of the Lights (Copt); First Father (Copt); Primal Father (Parth); God (c); the Good Lord (Gr); God Sroshaw (Parth); Zurvan [MP, Parth, Sogd: *Azrua*; OT: *Äzrua*];

Sovereign of Paradise (MP, Parth); Sovereign God of the Paradise of Light (Sogd); King of the Gardens of Light (Ar); Venerable One of the Light of the World of the Pure Light (Chin); Great King (Ar); King of the World of Light (Ar); King of Truth (Copt); True God (Parth); Lord of All (Copt).

FIRST CREATION (CALL)

I. Mother of Life (c)

Other names: Mother of Life (c); Living Mother (Parth); Excellent or Good Mother (Chin); Primal Mother (Copt); Mother of the Just/Righteous (Parth, Sogd); Mother of Light (Parth); Mother of the Lord Ohrmizd/Ohrmazd (MP, Parth); Gynemorphous God (MP); God Who Dispenses Peace and Joy (Sogd); Joyous Mother (Ar); Holy Primal Spirit (Copt); Great Spirit (Copt, Parth); Spirit of the Righteous (Ar); Holy Spirit (c).

II. Primal Man (c)

Other names: Lord Ohrmizd/Ohrmazd (MP, Parth, Sogd); God Ohrmizd (OT); Sien-yi (Chin).

III. The Five Sons of the Primal Man (c)

Other names: The Five Shining Gods [Syr: *Ziwane*]; the Five Gods (Syr); Quinary God (OT); the Five Lights (Syr, Parth); the Sons of Light (Syr); the Five Elements (Syr, Gr, Lat, Copt); the Five Bodies (Ar, Chin); the Five Limbs (Gr, Ar); the Splendors (Syr); Armor (c); the Immortal Saints [MP, Sogd: *Amahraspandan*]; Soul or Self (c); the Good Soul (MP); the Living Soul (Syr, Copt, Parth, Sogd); Light Self (MP, Parth); Living Self (MP, Parth, Sogd, OT); God of That Which Really Is (MP).

Syr	Copt	Ar ¹	Gr + Lat	MP	Ar ² + OT
1. light	light	fire	wind	air	breeze
2. wind	fire	light	light	wind	wind
3. water	water	wind	water	light	light
4. fire	wind	water	fire	water	water
5. air	air	breeze	[air]	fire	fire

SECOND CREATION (CALL)

I. Friend of the Lights (Syr, MP, Ar)

Other names: Blessed/Beloved of the Lights (Syr, Parth, Sogd); Sublime of the Lights (MP).

II. Great Builder (Syr, MP, Parth, Sogd)

Other names: Artisan God of the New Earth (Syr, MP, Parth); God Bam [Parth < Syr *Ban*]; Architect of the Lights (MP).

III. Living Spirit (c)

Other names: Pure Breath (Chin); Demiurge (Gr [Sogd: *Vishparkar*]); God Mihr [MP: *Mihryazd*]; Lord of the Seven Parts of the World (Sogd); Father of Life (Copt); Judge of Truth (Copt); Just Judge (Parth, Sogd, Copt).

IV. The Five Sons of the Living Spirit (c)

Other names: the Saints of the Macrocosm (Chin); the Five Envoys of Light (Chin); the Five Guardians Who Do Not Sleep (Copt).

1. ORNAMENT OF SPLENDOR (SYR)

Other names: He Who Maintains the World (Sogd, Chin); Keeper of the Splendors [Lat: *Splenditenens*; Gr: *Pheggokatokos*]; Master of the Land [MP: *Dahibed*].

2. GREAT KING OF MAGNIFICENCE (SYR)

Other names: King of Honor [Lat: *Rex honoris*]; Lord of Heaven (Sogd); Great King of the Ten Heavens (Chin); Master of the Guardhouse [MP: *Pahrbed/Pahragbed*].

3. ADAMAS/ADAMANT OF LIGHT (SYR, COPT)

Other names: Adamas (Gr, Lat); Fighting Hero (Lat); Conqueror Who Subdues the Demons (Chin); Master of the Village [MP: *Wisbed*]; Tetramorphous God (MP); Lord Vahram (Sogd).

4. KING OF GLORY [SYR, COPT, LAT: GLORIOSUS REX]

Other names: He Who Hastens Clarity (Chin); God of the Three Wheels (OT); God Who Makes the Breath Rise, Who Evokes the Spirit (MP); Master of the Tribe [MP: *Zandbed*]; God of the Earth [Sogd: *Spendarmard*].

5. PORTER (SYR)

Other names: Atlas (Gr, Lat, Copt); Omophorus (Gr, Copt, Lat [*Mundum ferens humeris*], Sogd); He Who Is in the Bowels of the Earth (Chin); Master of the House [MP: *Manbed*].

THIRD CREATION (CALL)

I. The Messenger (Syr)

Other names: The One Who Has Been Sent (Gr, Copt); Third Envoy (Gr, Copt, Lat [*Tertius legatus*], Parth, Sogd); Great Envoy of the Beneficent Light (Chin); Able Worker (Chin); God Narisah (MP); God Narisaf (Parth, Sogd); God of the Land of the Light (MP, Parth); Lord Zenares (MP); God Mihr (Parth).

II. Jesus the Splendor (Syr, MP, Parth)

Other names: Savior (Gr, Copt, Lat); God of the World of Wisdom [MP: *Xradeshahryazd*]; Envoy of Light (Chin); Christ (Copt).

III. Virgin/Maiden of the Light (c)

Other names: the Twelve Virgins/Maidens (Syr); the Virgins (Parth); the Twelve Virgins of the Light (Syr, MP); the Twelve Daughters of God (Sogd); the Twelve Sovereignities (Parth); Sadwis (Parth); Divine Gynemorphous Manifestation (MP).

IV. Perfect Man (Gr, Copt, Lat, MP, Parth)

Other names: Wahman (MP, Parth); Intellect-Light (Copt, Parth, Sogd); Great Intellect (Copt, MP); Great Light (Chin); New Man (Copt, Lat, Chin); Pillar of Glory (Syr, Gr, Copt, Ar, Parth [*Bamistun*], Sogd); Just Srosh/Srosha (MP, Sogd, Chin); God Porter of the Worlds (MP); Great Porter [Copt: Omophorus]; Glory of Religion (MP, Parth, Sogd); God Fully Embodied (Sogd); God Nomqutī (OT).

The Five Limbs of the Perfect Man (Copt, Ar)

Other names: the Five Kinds (Ar); the Five Thoughts (Parth); the Five Worlds (Syr, Ar, Gr, Lat); the Five Aeons (Gr); the Five Dwellings (Syr); the Names of the Soul (Gr); the Fathers (Syr); the Intellectual Splendors (Gr); the Five Intellectuals of Life/Light (Copt).

Syr	Gr	Lat	MP
1. reason	noūs	mens	bam
2. sense	ennoia	sensus	manohmed
3. thought	phronēsis	prudencia	us
4. reflection	enthumēsis	intellectus	andeshisn
5. intention	logismos	cogitatio	parmanag

The Quinary System

The heart of the mythological system concerns the issuing of three series of “Calls” that resolve into quinary and consist, respectively, of (A) undecomposable elements, (B) personified cosmic functions, and (C) personified intellectual faculties:

(A)	I	II	III	—————→		5	
(B)	I	II	III	IV	—————→	5	
(C)	I	II	III	IV	V	—————→	5

These three series represent the three possible modes for apprehending the nature of light: physics, cosmology, and psychology.

The first series, involving the five sons of the Primal Man (or splendors) [Syr: *ziwane*], is formed of the constitutive elements of the luminous bodies, or light particles, that fill up the atmosphere and that come from the sun itself. In codifying its mythology, Manichaean doctrine made two decisive modifications to the fundamental pentadic structure of solar bodies (a cosmology already found in Bardesanes and debated in all the Greek-language philosophy of the period): on the one hand, the *ziwane* were relocated to the summit of the universe, where they formed the dwellings of the supreme entity (Father of Greatness); on the other hand, these same *ziwane*, stripped from the armor of the Primal Man by the violence of Satan’s desire, were thrust down into the lower realms or cellars of the cosmos, where they became mixed with their “unclean” and “compact” contraries, to quote the terms used by al-Shahrastani in the table of categories in *al-Milal*:

Syr/Copt	Ar ¹	Ar ²
1. smoke	fog	blaze
2. fire	blaze	darkness
3. wind	simoom	simoom
4. water	poison	fog
5. darkness	darkness	smoke → Hummama

The sources agree in describing this mixture as a combat that concludes with the swallowing and ingestion of the *ziwane* in the cosmic belly of

the King of Darkness. Al-Shahrastani unambiguously states that the first series of Calls constitutes the cosmological foundation of the Manichaean conception of light as astral essence: "The land of light did not cease to be fine [= made up of luminous particles] by contrast with the form of this land; it has the form of the body [*jirm*] of the sun and its radiance is like the radiance of the sun." It is these fundamental corpuscular elements (rather than the conceptual elements insisted upon not only by Iranian sources but also, it appears, by Turbo in the *Acta Archelai*) that give the narrative its impetus and that supply a basis for the system at the end of the process of the Third Creation.

The second series of Calls introduces four demiurgical functions exercised by the five sons of the Living Spirit: guardianship of the *ziwane* by the Ornament of Splendor; struggle against the *ziwane*-swallowing demons by the Great King of Magnificence and the Adamas of Light; supervision of the distillatory function of the cosmic wheels by the King of Glory; and support of the heavenly lands by Atlas. Our sources have a great deal to say about these functions, and the popular success of Manichaean gigantomachy made it possible to expand upon Mani's exposition by the addition of many details that capture the imagination. This fact must not, however, cause us to lose sight of the essential thing, namely, that the demiurge made the two lustrous bodies from the "remains of the soul," that is, from the light elements ingurgitated by the archons and then spat out by them and eventually filtered. The two stars were therefore, as 'Abd al-Jabbar said [in *al-Mughni*], "pure light" and, by virtue of this, located beyond the zodiac and the planets.

The third series, of personified faculties, forms the Perfect Man (or Light-*Noūs*) as a result of the operation of the machine for purifying the last particles of light dispersed in the world. The Messenger positions himself in the sun, and Jesus the Splendor, assisted by the Virgin of Light, in the moon. Then begins the refining of the *ziwane* by the action of the three wheels of wind, water, and fire: the particles of light recovered from the depths of matter (*hylē*) by the machine's buckets are first purified and then conveyed to the moon, which carries them to the sun, which in turn transports them to the land of light at the summit of the universe. This axis of transmission, around which the bodies borne up by the circular

motion of the wheels rotate and escape the darkness, links the lower parts of the cosmos with the higher parts. Rotation around the axis has the effect of radically transforming the nature of these luminous bodies, making them Limbs of the Intellect [*Gr noera*], which jointly constitute the Perfect Man:

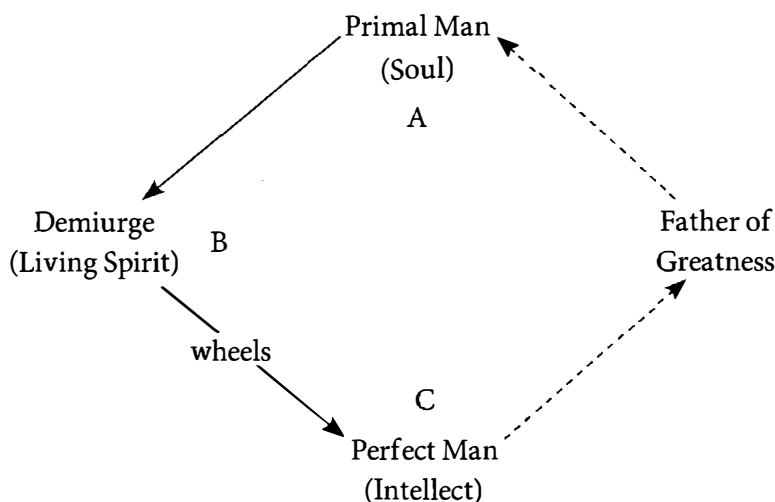


Figure 8.

Mani worked out the design of his system not as a philosopher but as a painter. This system was the product not of theoretical reflection but of behavior linked to the perception of colors, odors, and flavors. The physics of the *ziwane* is therefore a sensory physics. "The agreeable taste that is in foods," Mani declared in a passage cited by Ephraem, "belongs to the light that is mixed in them." In al-Shahrastani's account, the land of light, abode of the Father of Greatness, is likewise described in sensory terms: "It smells very good, and its colors are the colors of the rainbow." Augustine, for his part, noted that if the Manichaeans were particularly fond of cereals, grapes, melons, lettuce, olives, roses, and violets, it was because the colors of these fruits and vegetables are "signs of the presence of God." Color is therefore the first of the three goods [*tria bona*] that light (masculine in Aramaic) inseminates in the eye (feminine). Four colors of the *ziwane* are known through a fragment of Bardesanes cited in Ephraem's *Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardesanes*: "Light is white, fire red, the wind blue, water green." The fifth color is gold, which

Augustine mentions as a sign of the light inherent in melons and which applies to the fifth element, air, breeze, or ether.

It must be noted, finally, that the process by which the gastric machine of the Manichaean elect distills the light diffused in foods is the biological counterpart to the cosmic process by which the three-wheeled machine called into existence during the Second Creation purifies the *ziwane*. In other words, the Manichaean stands in the same relation to his stomach as the demiurge and his sons stand to the world, which is to say that he is a maker of light. The microcosm repeats the macrocosm.

Augustine understood the mechanism of this exchange very well. After having summarized the myth of the mixture that leads to panpsychism, in *De moribus Manichaeorum* [On the Customs of the Manichaeans, 15.36], he added, "If the food prepared from vegetables and fruits enters the bodies of the holy [= the elect], by their chastity, their prayers, and their psalms everything in these foods that is noble and divine is purified, that is, perfected in every way, so that it can regain its own domain free from all defilement." Chewing, swallowing, and digestion work to separate the dark matter of food, evacuated in stools, from its luminous and divine part, the "limb of God" [*membrum dei*], which brings about the return to pure light.

A passage in *De natura boni* (§45) clarifies the text just quoted from *De moribus*: "The portion and nature of God that has been mixed is purified [*purgari*] by the elect when they eat and drink, for it is fettered in all foods, they say. Therefore, when the elect or holy, taking these foods for the reflection of their bodies, eat them and drink them, by their sanctity the portion of God that is mixed is detached [*soavi*], sealed [*signari*], and delivered [*liberari*]." The four verbs mentioned by Augustine have a technical sense: thanks to the luminosity trapped within his body (otherwise known as the *sanctitas*), the elect is able to filter the light by separating out what is unclean and keeping intact the filtered part, which is then liberated and restored to the world from on high. Manducation therefore involves two essential operations: descent of foods from the mouth to the stomach, where filtering [Syr: *sulala*; Lat: *purgatio*] takes place, and a rising back up of the filtered and recovered [Syr: *masaqta*; Lat: *reditus*] particles. This two-part movement repeats on the level of the human

body the dual cosmic motion of the descent and rise of the *ziwane*, which were first swallowed by the demons, then spat out by them, and finally distilled, being drawn up out of the world and carried to the moon and the sun, whence they were conducted to the land of light. According to the fine formula of the Chinese Manichaeans, "The universe is the pharmacy where the luminous bodies heal."

Chronology of Manichaeism after Mani

- 274 (or 276/277): Shortly before his death in prison at Beth-Lapat, Mani designates Sis (Sisin, Sisinnios) of Kaskar, in southern Baylonia, to succeed him as head of the church (*Kephalaia*, pl. 211–12). Under Karder's influence, Bahram II, the fifth Sassanian sovereign (274–91), son of Bahram I (271–74), unleashes persecutions against Manichaeans and Christians.
- Ca. 280: P. Rylands 469 (= 700 Van Haelst), Gr. pastoral letters from an Egyptian bishop (Theonas of Alexandria?) taking issue with the ritual and ascetic practices of Manichaeans and warning against the propaganda of the women of the sect. The oldest anti-Manichaean document so far found.
- 284 (or 286 or 287): Arrest and appearance of Sis before Karder and Bahram II at Beshabuhr in Fars; there he suffers martyrdom after ten years as supreme pontiff. Innaios, brother of Zabed, succeeds him at the head of the Manichaean Church (*Hom.* 81–83).
- Ca. 290: Manichaeans frequent the school of Alexander at Lycopolis (Asyut) in Upper Egypt. Alexander writes a treatise in Greek that has come down to us as *Contra Manichaei opinioniones disputatio* (Against the doctrine of Mani).
- 292: After an interregnum of four months following the death of Bahram II, Narseh, son of Shapur, becomes king of kings (292–301). End of persecutions against Manichaeans and Christians.
- 297: On 31 March, following a report from Julianus, proconsul of Africa, Diocletian promulgates from Alexandria an edict against Manichaeans suspected of being agents of the Romans' traditional enemy: *Persica adversaria nobis gente*.
- 298: Narseh is vanquished by Galerius, commander of the Roman army, and cedes five provinces of Lesser Armenia to Rome. The peace treaty was to last some forty years.
- Ca. 301–2: First appearance of books 1–8 of the *Historia ecclesiae* (Church history) by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea. In his brief note regarding Mani (7.31), Eusebius fails to mention the *Acta Archelai*.

302–9: Reign of Hormuz II, son of Narseh: resumption of persecutions against Manichaeans and Christians.

Ca. 306: Ephraem Syrus is born at Nisibis.

336–37: Afrahat (“the Persian sage”) writes his first ten “demonstrations” [*tahwyatha*] in Syriac. First mention of Mani (2.9) among writers in the Syriac language.

Ca. 340: Greek redaction of the *Acta Archelai* (“The Acts of the Disputation [of Archelaus, Bishop of Caschar in Mesopotamia] with the Hesiarch Manes”), attributed to Hegemonius—a fantastic exposition of Mani’s origins that was to become the major source for Christian heresiology. Mani is presented as the petty slave of a rich widow descended from a certain Terbinthos/Buddha, himself descended from a Greek-educated Arab merchant named Scythianos. Having freed Kubrikos/Mani, the widow is said to have bequeathed her fortune to him on her death.

Ca. 345: Eusebius, bishop of Emesa, writes a treatise against the Manichaeans, mentioned by Epiphanius and Theodoret. Text lost.

348: Cyril of Jerusalem composes the sixth of his *Catechetical Lectures*. First known quotation from the *Acta Archelai*.

Ca. 350: Composition of the Coptic codices known as the Nag Hammadi library [from the place of their discovery in Upper Egypt in 1945].

Ca. 352: George of Laodicea writes a treatise against the Manichaeans, cited by Epiphanius and Theodoret. Text lost.

354: On 13 November Augustine is born at Thagaste in Numidia (modern-day Souk Ahras in Algeria).

Ca. 358: Death of Serapion of Thmuis, author of a treatise against the Manichaeans. Text conserved.

363: The Roman emperor Julian (“the Apostate”) dies in his war against Shapur II. As a consequence of the peace accord signed with his successor, Jovian, the Iranians reacquire Nisibis and the provinces of Lesser Armenia previously lost by Narseh.

364: The pagan rhetorician Libanius writes to his friend Priscianus, governor of Palestine: “There are Manichaeans more or less everywhere, but nowhere are they numerous. They harm no one, but some harm them.”

Ca. 365: Latin version of the *Acta Archelai*. Titus of Bostra composes a treatise in four books against the Manichaeans, complete only in its Syriac version.

Ca. 370: Lefort fragment (Paris, B.N., 131⁴, fols. 154–58), an extract from a treatise against pagans and heretics written in Sahidic Coptic by a monk in

- the White Monastery of Upper Egypt. Identified by H. J. Polotsky in 1932, it contains four quotations from Turbo in the *Acta Archelai*.
- 372: On 2 March Valentinian I issues edict against the Manichaeans of Rome. Fines, banishment, and confiscation of places of worship.
- 373: Augustine enters as *auditor* (hearer) in the Manichaean Church of Africa. Death of Ephraem Syrus at Edessa (9 June?).
- Ca. 375: Macarius of Magnesia composes his *Apocritus*, in which he argues that Manichaeism has “corrupted” all regions of the East.
- 376: Epiphanius drafts Heresy 66 of his *Panarion*, relating to the Manichaeans. Long quotations from the *Acta Archelai* and useful information regarding the Manichaean community in Palestine.
- Ca. 378: Diodorus of Tarsus composes his great treatise against the Manichaeans, mentioned by Theodoret and by Photius. Text lost. In the first seven books he refutes the *Gospel* of Mani and the *Modion* of Addas.
- Ca. 380: P. Heidelberg 684. Fragment of a Sahidic Coptic translation of the sixth catechism of Cyril of Jerusalem.
- 381: On 8 May Theodosius I issues an edict imposing attainder upon Manichaeans and depriving them of the right to draw up a will. Renewed on 31 March 382 and applied to every “Manichaean” hiding behind the names Encratite, Saccophorus, and Hydroparataste.
- 383: Augustine, now twenty-nine years of age, meets Faustus of Milevis, Manichaean *episcopus* of Africa, at Carthage. Disappointed by Faustus, Augustine begins to detach himself from Manichaeism without, however, definitively breaking with it.
- 385: Priscillian and his associates are executed at Trier as “Manichaeans.” Filstrus of Brescia writes a catalogue of heresies, drawing upon the Latin version of the *Acta Archelai* for the section on the Manichaeans (61).
- 386: Faustus of Milevis is condemned to exile with other Manichaeans. In January 387, on the occasion of the *vota publica* of Theodosius and Arcadius, the sentence is abrogated.
- 387: Augustine is baptized at Milan during the night of 24–25 April.
- 388–89: Augustine writes *De moribus Manichaeorum* (On the customs of the Manichaeans), his first work against the Manichaeans.
- 389: On 17 June Valentinian II (in reality Theodosius I) issues an edict condemning the Manichaeans of Rome to exile.
- Ca. 390: Composition of the Coptic Manichaean codices found in Upper Egypt in 1929, at Medinet Madi in the Faiyum.
- 392: Public debate at Hippo between Augustine and Fortunatus, Manichaean *presbyter* of Hippo. Faustus of Milevis dies around this time.

394: Augustine writes *Contra Adimantum*.

396–97: Augustine writes *Contra epistolam fundamenti*.

398–400: Augustine reads the thirty-three *Capitula* of Faustus of Milevis and drafts the thirty-three books of his *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*.

404: Disputes between Porphyry, bishop of Gaza, and Julius of Antioch, a Manichaeian monk. In December, at Hippo, a public debate between Augustine and Felix, *electus* of the Manichaeian Church of Africa.

405: Honorius renews the constitutions of his predecessors against the Manichaeians on 12 February. Heavy fines are levied on governors and officials who do not carry out his orders.

Ca. 420: A Manichaeian by the name of Cresconius, in his oath of renunciation, denounces eleven of his coreligionists residing in Mauretania Caesariensis.

425: On 23 October Valentinian III forbids the Manichaeians to live within a hundred kilometers of Rome.

428: Theodosius II prohibits Manichaeians from staying in cities.

430: Augustine dies at Hippo on 28 August.

443: Pope Leo I the Great hastens to take harsh measures against the Manichaeians of Rome and against their bishop.

445: On 19 June Valentinian III renews all the measures taken by his predecessors against the Manichaeians.

Ca. 453: Theodoret composes his catalogue of heresies—the first statement by a Greek Christian writer that has come down to us giving a precise description of the Manichaeian myth.

Ca. 490: Heracleon of Chalcedon writes a treatise against the Manichaeians in twenty volumes, mentioned by Photius. It refuted Mani's *Gospel*, *Book of Giants*, and *Treasure*.

492: Pope Gelasius I discovers several Manichaeians in Rome and sentences them to deportation after having burned their books.

Ca. 510: Julian of Halicarnassus composes a treatise against the Manichaeians, mentioned in the *Doctrina Patrum*.

518: Severus, monophysite patriarch of Antioch, pronounces a homily against the Manichaeians (123) on 25 March. Text conserved in a Syriac version, by James of Edessa (early eighth century), reproducing lengthy extracts from the beginning of Mani's *Pragmateia*.

Ca. 520: Pope Hormisdas subjects several Manichaeians to torture and burns their books before sentencing them to exile.

527: Updating of anti-Manichaeian legislation by the emperors Justin and Justinian. The death penalty now falls not only upon Manichaeians but also

upon converts who failed to denounce their former coreligionists or who are suspected of having contacts with them. Severe punishments are provided for officials who preserve Manichaean books or fail to denounce their Manichaean colleagues. The Nestorian Paul the Persian is assigned responsibility for refuting the Manichaean Photinus, who had just been thrown in prison, in public debate. First Greek formulas of renunciation imposed on the Manichaeans.

- 531: Khosrau I Anushirwan ascends the imperial throne at Ctesiphon on 13 September. He dies in 579.
- 540: Justinian orders a roundup of opponents (pagans and heretics from Constantinople and Asia Minor); the monophysite John of Asia conducts the raids and carries out interrogations. At Harran, in northwest Mesopotamia, the Greek Neoplatonist philosopher Simplicius writes his commentary on Epictetus's *Enchiridion*, in which he undertakes a methodical refutation of Manichaean cosmology and ethics; he was in contact with a local Manichaean monk ("one of those who among them were considered sages," 35.91)
- Ca. 570: Rebellion of the Manichaean communities of Transoxiana led by Shad-Ohrmizd. These Manichaeans, known as Denawars, were rigorists in matters of religion [*den*—whence their name] and broke with the Mother Church of Babylon. They were to be the missionaries of Upper Asia and China. At Mecca, in Arabia, the birth of Muhammad.
- Ca. 595: Pope Gregory the Great reckons there are still Manichaeans in Sicily and in northern Africa.
- 600–601: Death of the reformer Shad-Ohrmizd. Sogdian, the language spoken in the vicinity of Samarkand, gradually replaces Parthian as the language of the Manichaean Church.
- Ca. 612: Muhammad hears the call of the angel proclaiming him "messenger of God." Visions, revelations, and heavenly voyages continue until 621.
- 1 H/622: Migration [*hijra*] of Muhammad and his followers to Yathrib = Medina (the "City").
- 11 H/632: Muhammad leads a farewell pilgrimage [*hajj*] to Mecca. Returning to Medina, he dies on 8 June.
- 16 H/637: The Arabs seize Ctesiphon [= al-Mada'in]. The last Sassanid king, Yazdigird III, is defeated at the battle of Jalula.
- 29 H/649: The Arabs push onward into Khurasan.
- 54 H/674: Bukhara is conquered by the Arabs.
- 55 H/675: Sogdian-speaking Manichaeans, having departed from Samarkand, cross into Chinese Turkestan and reach the Yellow River.

56 H/676: Samarkand falls into the hands of the Arabs.

75 H/694: Many Manichaeans who had left Mesopotamia under the last Sassanids return to Iraq and benefit from the tolerance of the governor al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, without, however, being granted the legal protection accorded to non-Muslims [*dhimma*]. The same year, the presence of a Manichaean dignitary is recorded at the Chinese court.

91–93 H/710–12: The Arabs subjugate Sogdiana. At al-Mada'in, Mihr becomes head of the Manichaean Church of Babylon. His pontificate lasts until 740.

106 H/724: Khalid b. 'Abd Allah al-Qasri, who was born of a Christian mother, is governor of Iraq. Zoroastrians, Christians, and Manichaeans benefit from his tolerance. Dismissed in 120 H/738, he died under torture in 126 H/743–44. The *Fihrist* says that he was an infidel [*zindiq*].

Ca. 110 H/728: Wasil b. 'Ata', the founder of Mu'tazilism, attempts to refute the Manichaeans in his *Thousand Questions*. Work lost. First Muslim writer to have written on Manichaeism.

Ca. 112 H/730: Mihr, the Manichaean imam of al-Mada'in, tries to put an end to the schism of the Denawars.

731: On 16 July, on the order of the emperor Hsüan-tsung, a Manichaean bishop composes in Chinese a compendium of the doctrines and rules of Manichaeism, found around 1900 at Tun-huang.

Ca. 117 H/735: Internal disputes within the Manichaean communities of Iraq over the question of fasting. Rebellion breaks out in the community of Miqlas. Abu Sa'id Raja becomes imam of the church.

132 H/750: The city of Kashgar, in Chinese Turkestan, an important Manichaean fief, falls to the Qarluqs (Karlucs) and becomes subject to Turkic influences.

142 H/759: Ibn al-Muqaffa', accused of heresy [*zandaqa*], dies in prison.

Ca. 143 H/760: Abu Hilal al-Dayhuri, an African Manichaean, becomes supreme leader of the Manichaean Church in al-Mada'in. He puts an end to the Miqlas revolt.

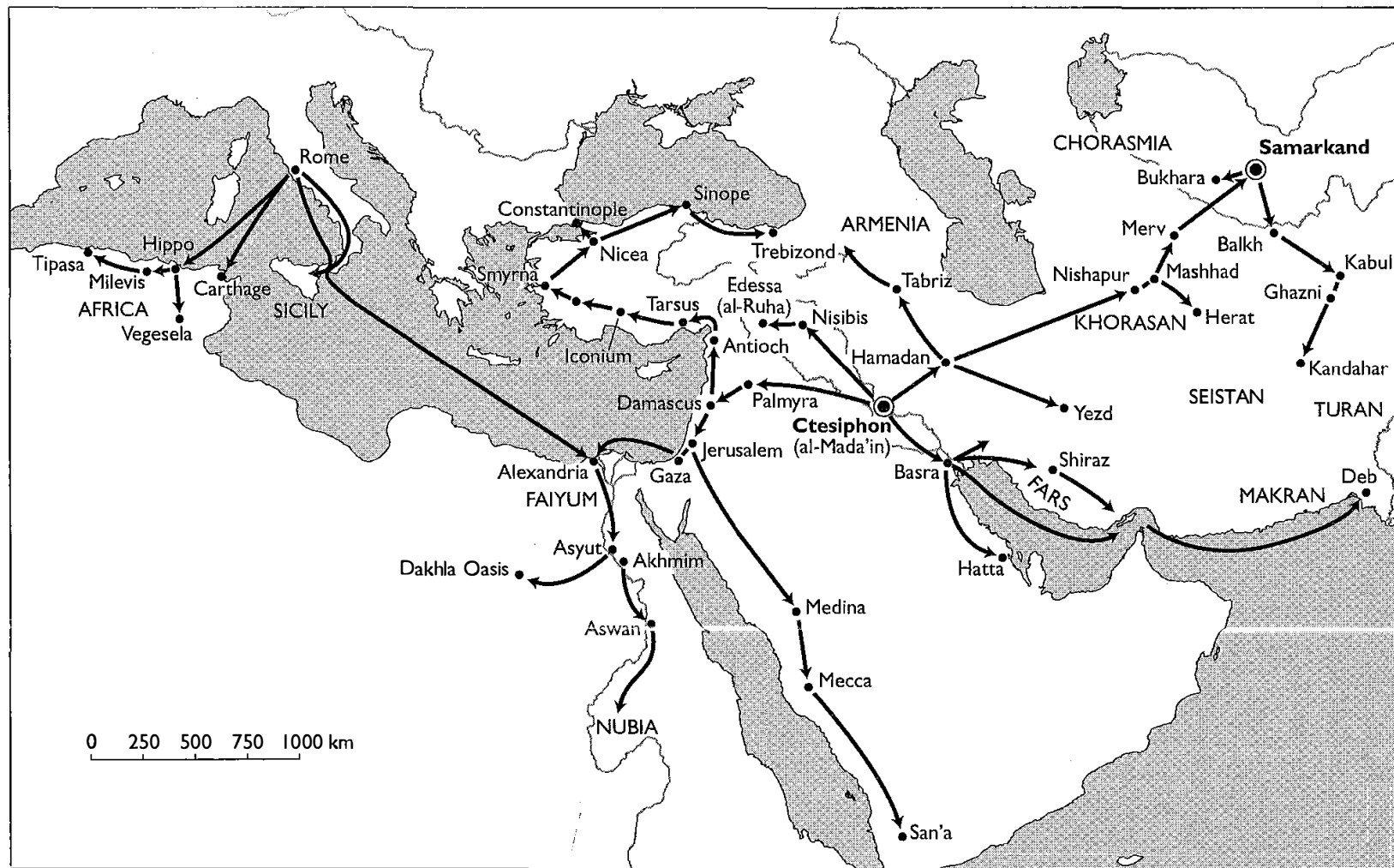
762: On 20 November the Uighurs take and sack the rebel Chinese city of Lo-yang on the Yellow River. On this occasion their ruler [*qaghan*, or "great khan"], Meu-yu, makes the acquaintance of the Manichaean missionaries residing in the city and converts to Manichaeism.

763: After his victory over the rebel Chinese of Lo-yang, the Uighur *qaghan* returns to his capital, Ordu Baliq, in the Orkhon Valley. He brings back with him four Manichaean monks, including a certain Juei-si, from the

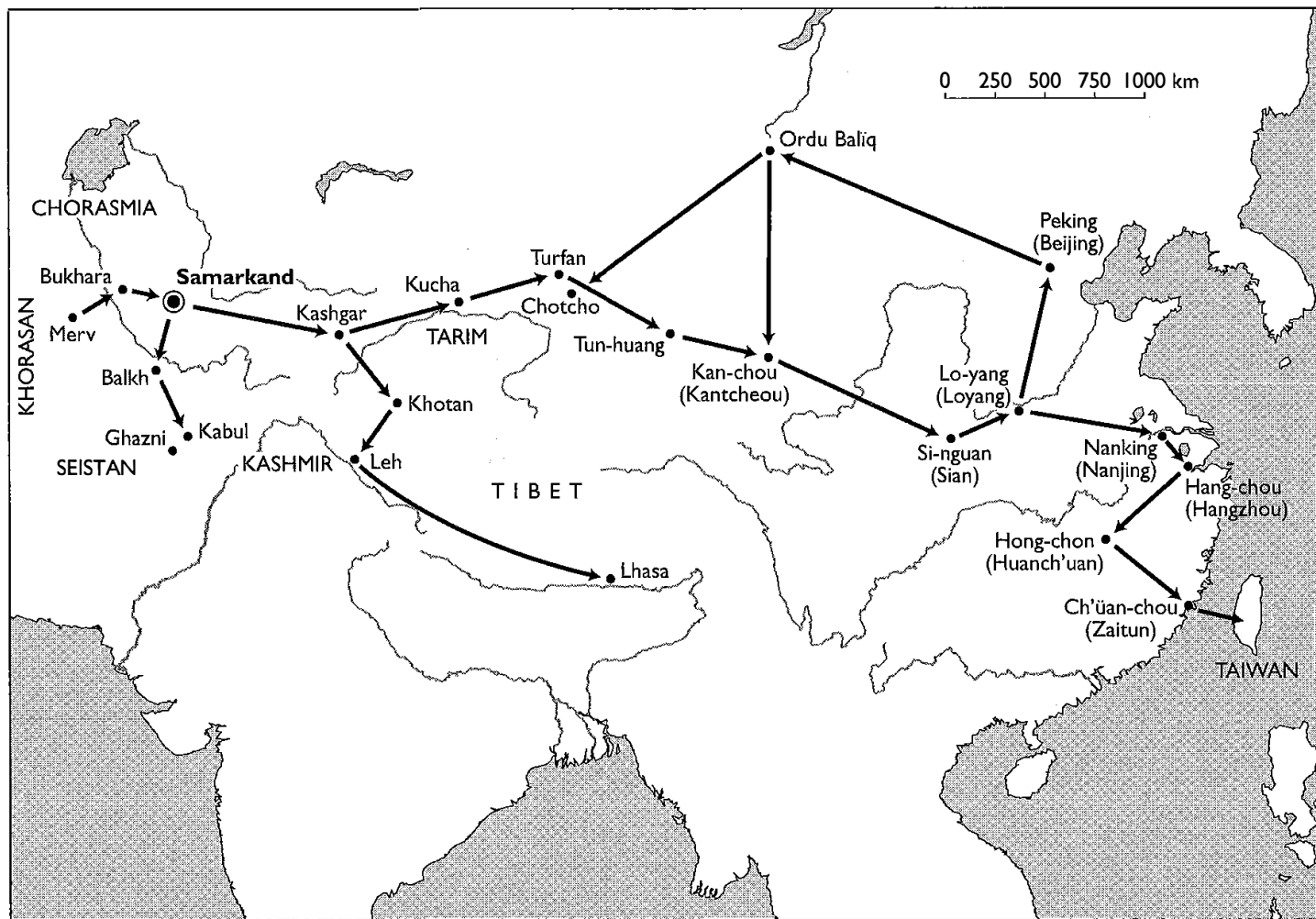
- community of Lo-yang. Manichaeism becomes the official religion of the Turkish Empire, and a Manichaean master settles in Ordu Balıq.
- 768: Acceding to the *qaghan's* request, the Chinese emperor authorizes the Manichaeans residing in his lands to erect temples and monasteries. This authorization is renewed in 771.
- 163–170 H/779–86: Under the third and fourth Abbasid caliphs repression strikes the Manichaeans of Iraq and the intellectuals accused of *zandaqa*.
- 781: Nestorian stele of Si-ngan-fu erected.
- 791–92: Theodore bar Konai, a Nestorian from the region of Wasit, completes the eleven treatises of his *Liber scholiorum* (Book of scholia). The eleventh treatise contains a catalogue of heresies; the doctrinal part of the section on Mani is a summary of the *Pragmateia*.
- 806: Arrival of Manichaean priests at the Chinese court in the company of a Uighur embassy from Ordu Balıq.
- Ca. 815: Trilingual inscription (Chinese, Turkish, Sogdian) from Karabalghasun relating the history of Manichaeism's introduction among the Uighurs.
- Ca. 817: Second Uighur embassy to the Chinese court, again with a Manichaean delegation.
- Ca. 205 H/820: The seventh Abbasid caliph, al-Ma'mun, writes a treatise against the Manichaeans. His work has not survived.
- 840: An army of "one hundred thousand" Kirghiz horsemen takes Ordu Balıq. End of the Uighur Empire having its seat at Orkhon and dispersion of the Turkish tribes.
- 843: The Chinese Emperor Wu-tsung orders the closing of the Manichaean monasteries, the confiscation of property, and the destruction of books.
- Ca. 231 H/845: Death of the Mu'tazilite al-Nazzam, author of a refutation of the Manichaeans. Text known solely through the citations to it by al-Khayyat (who died shortly after 300 H/912) in his *Kitab al-intisar*.
- 849: Founding of the Uighur kingdom at Chotcho (Xotcho), in the Turfan oasis. Manichaean princes were to stay there for two centuries.
- 236 H/850–51: Abu 'Isa l-Warraq composes his collection of doxographies. The charge of *zandaqa* brought against him leads to the disappearance of his work. Muslim heresiology is largely inspired by his works.
- Ca. 256 H/870: Death of the philosopher al-Kindi, author of several refutations of dualists and Manichaeans. Works lost but largely drawn upon by Ibn al-Nadim.
- 293 H/906: Death of the Mu'tazilite al-Nashī'. The surviving fragments of his

- doxography (*Kitab al-ausat fi l-maqalat*) show that he had a precise knowledge of Manichaeian cosmology.
- Ca. 320 H/932: Ibn al-Nadim reports that some five hundred Manichaeians still live in Samarkand at this time.
- Ca. 339 H/950: According to Ibn al-Nadim, there are some three hundred Manichaeians in Baghdad under the reign of the first Buyid Dynasty of Iraq.
- 345 H/956: Death of al-Mas'udi.
- 349 H/960: The Turkish population of Kashgar (Chinese Turkistan) is Islamized.
- 372 H/982: The anonymous Persian author of the *Kitab hudud al-'alam* reports the existence of a Manichaeian monastery [*khangah*] at Samarkand.
- 377 H/987: Ibn al-Nadim completes the *Fihrist*. The first section of the ninth chapter is devoted in large part to the Manichaeians, the fullest heresiological exposition of the history and doctrine of Manichaeism. At this time there are, according to him, only five Manichaeians living in Baghdad.
- 380 H/990: 'Abd al-Jabbar, Mu'tazilite theologian and judge [*qadi*] of Rayy, completes *al-Mughni*.
- ca. 390 H/1000: Al-Biruni writes *al-Athar al-baqiya* (Chronology of the ancient nations).
- 1028: The Tanguts seize control of the Uighur principality of Kan-chu.
- Ca. 424 H/1033: Al-Biruni composes the *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind* (Book of inquiry into India).
- Ca. 1035: The chamber in the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, near Tun-huang, containing the Manichaeian *Compendium* and other manuscripts is sealed, not to be reopened until 1900 or so, when its contents were discovered by a Taoist monk. Aurel Stein visited it in 1906. Paul Pelliot entered the chamber on 3 March 1908 and undertook an inventory of its contents. In 1910 the Chinese government repatriated the surviving documents to Beijing.
- 427 H/1036: Al-Biruni writes his epistle on the catalogue of al-Razi's writings and relates how he obtained Mani's heptateuch.
- 485 H/1092: Abu l-Ma'ali-ye 'Alavi composes the *Bayan al-adyan*.
- 518 H/1124: Beginning of the reign of the first chief of khans [*gürkhan*] of the Qara Khitay (Kara-khitai) over all of Chinese Turkestan. Ibn al-Athir characterizes him as "Manichaeian," that is, pagan and idolatrous.
- 548 H/1153: Death of al-Shahrastani.
- 1206: On the upper Onon River, in the presence of all the Mongol chiefs and princes, Tämüjin receives the title of Tchinggis-qan [= Genghis-khan].

- 608 H/1211: Collapse of the Qara Khitay Empire, centered in the Tarim Basin, to the profit of their vassals and neighbors, the Muslim rulers of Khwarazm (Chorasmia).
- 618 H/1221: The capital of Khwarazm is invested by Chaghatay and Ögedey, chiefs of the Golden Horde.
- 1265: A Chinese Manichaean dignitary, Chang Hi-cheng, writes two letters to Huang Chen, the Confucian archivist at the imperial court, to demonstrate to him the scriptural soundness and respectability of his religion.
- 1292: Marco Polo and his uncle Mafeo meet a group of Manichaeans at Ch'üan-chou (Zaitun).



Map 1. The Extent of Babylonian Manichaeism (3rd–6th centuries)



Map 2. The Extent of Sogdian Manichaeism (7th–13th centuries)

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